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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

DON'T STOP THE PRESSES

Readers of TNR have responded generously to our request for examples of boring headlines. The entire staff is comatose with appreciation. In the late 1920s the British writer Claud Cockburn won a contest among editors at the *Times* of London to see who could get the most boring headline into the paper. Cockburn's entry, which has become a legend in British journalism, was: "Small Earthquake in Chile/Not Many Dead." This is pathetic, another example of Britain's long decline as a civilization. In just the past month or so, without even trying, our American headline writers have produced any number of headlines far more boring than this ostensible classic.

The occasion for TNR's survey was an April 10 headline over Flora Lewis's column on the *New York Times* Op-Ed page: "Worthwhile Canadian Initiative." We posed the question whether this might actually be "the most boring headline ever written." *Le tout* Canada soon erupted in outrage at the suggestion that there is something intrinsically boring about matters Canadian. The *Toronto Star* treated the libel as front-page news, which some might say proves the point. Dear Canada: there are worse national images to have than that of being thought boring. Look at Libya. For that matter, now that your government's controversial payments to Michael Deaver are front-page news in America every day, you may look back on the boredom era with nostalgia. (Although, with—dare I say it?—characteristic Canadian earnestness, a CBC reporter called me up recently to ask how I thought "the boredom factor" had affected the Deaver scandal.)

But references to Canada are not essential to a boring headline. Merely helpful. Almost as boring as "Worthwhile Canadian Initiative" was the headline on a column by *Times* economic correspondent Leonard Silk: "U.S. Leadership Needed." (There, now, Canada. Feel better?) The editors at the *Times* Op-Ed page, in fact, are geniuses at coming up with headlines that refer to virtually nothing. I was impressed by "Trade, A Two-Way Street" (April 26, over an essay by Governor Richard Celeste of Ohio), and positively bowled over by "Beyond the News, Larger Issues" (subhead on a James Reston column, May 4). "Thoughts at Graduation Time" (subhead for some Robert Coles ruminations, May 11) wasn't bad, either.

When *Times* headline writers do get excited, they start issuing orders. "End Textile Quotas," they might command, or (May 10) "Continue Manned Flight in Space." Who, me? Well, O.K., I'll get right to it. But what on earth were we readers supposed to do April 21, when the headline over a *Times* editorial demanded that we "Make Foreign Flights More Familiar"? I read the editorial, and I still don't know.

My favorite genre of boring headline is the one gravely informing you that a development you weren't aware of and don't care about has reversed itself, ideally in some distant part of the globe. "Nepal Premier Won't Resign" is a golden-oldie example, but there was a masterpiece in the *Times* as recently as April 26: "Chill Falls on Warming Relations Between Australia and Indonesia." Closer to home but almost as choice was "University of Rochester Decides to Keep Name" (*Times*, April 18). A close cousin of the reversed-insignificant-development headline is the nothing-happened-at-all headline. An outstanding recent example in that category was "Dramatic Changes Fail to Materialize on Hill" (*Washington Post*, April 23). Then there's the nothing-is-going-to-happen headline. The judges found "Surprises Unlikely in Indiana" (*Chicago Tribune*, April 29) almost poignant.

Of course the largest category of boring headline falls under the general rubric of dog-bites-man. In the subcategory of stating-the-obvious, it would be difficult to top "CIA Analysis Sees Soviet Economy in Need of Changes" (*San Diego Union*, May 31, 1983). But "Prevent Burglary by Locking House, Detectives Urge" (*Boston Globe*, April 21) is pretty good, and I like the wacky specificity of

continued on page 41

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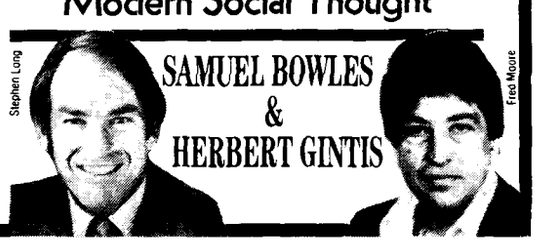

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CORRESPONDENCE

NO NIX ON BONNER

To the editors:

Fred Barnes reported in his May 19 "White House Watch: Nixon Made Me Do It" that White House officials have been saying that President Nixon persuaded President Reagan to pass up a meeting with Yelena Bonner. Those White House officials were wrong. The former president has never discussed the Bonner matter with President Reagan, anyone on his staff, or anyone else in or out of the government. Mr. Barnes did call me about his story, asking only for a comment about President Nixon's conversations with President Reagan about human rights in the Soviet Union. I responded that all discussions between the president and the former president were of course private. Since Mrs. Bonner has never come up in any of these conversations, had Mr. Barnes specifically told me he was writing a column on this subject, I would have been delighted to set him straight.

JOHN H. TAYLOR
Assistant to President Nixon
New York, New York

TRADITIONAL MEESE

To the editors:

In "Meese's Power Grab" (May 19), Murray Waas and Jeffrey Toobin criticize Attorney General Meese's decision that the Competition in Contracting Act is unconstitutional and therefore should not be obeyed. They asserted that since "*Marbury v. Madison*, it has been one of the uncontested maxims of American democracy that the judiciary—and the judiciary alone—has the power to declare statutes unconstitutional." According to Waas and Toobin, not only is Meese's position unconstitutional, it is also a break with tradition: "Until Ronald Reagan, no president has ever asserted the right to ignore a law he thinks is unconstitutional."

This criticism is mistaken. Several presidents have asserted the right to make their own independent evaluations of the constitutionality of congressional legislation, and to act on those evaluations. For example, Thomas Jefferson thought the Sedition Act prosecutions under the previous Adams administration were unconstitutional, and for that reason he pardoned all those imprisoned under the act and terminated the prosecution of those not yet convicted. Jefferson did this even though several Supreme Court justices, in their capacities as circuit judges, had conducted trials under the act and had ruled the law constitutional. In a letter to Mrs. John Adams in 1804, Jefferson wrote: "Nothing in the Constitution has given [the Supreme Court] a right to decide for the executive, more than to the executive to decide for them." Also, Andrew Jackson, in his message to Congress vetoing the law creating the second Bank of the United States, likewise asserted the right of the president to make his own determination of the constitutionality of legislation.

JAMES A. COX
Austin, Texas

GO NATIVE

To the editors:

I wonder if TNR's May 19 editorial "Please Go Away" does not miss the larger point in its gibe at Americans who have decided or felt forced to travel in the U.S. rather than to Europe this summer. Traveling within the U.S. may be triggered by fear of risk abroad, but might it also be fundamentally consistent with the increasingly strident (and effective) Reagan-era ethnocentrism, "New Patriotism," Wendy's hamburger wisdom, beer drinkers' boasting, Rocky's Soviet-conquering successes, and a renovated "buy American" fanfare? After all, American tourists, generally intolerant of national and cultural differences abroad, often bent upon turning hosts into servants, and often insistent that their hosts speak English, finally have a rationale for indulging their rekindled native (nativist) dispositions.

DAVID H. BROWN
New Haven, Connecticut

YENS AND YANKS

To the editors:

You made a most amazing statement in "Three Summits" (May 12) concerning the Tokyo summit: "And Mulroney's Canada and Nakasone's Japan rarely figure into global affairs." While Canadians don't appreciate the snub, the Japanese are dumbfounded. Japan has the second-largest economy in the world; in 15 to 20 years its economy will probably surpass

continued on page 41

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JUNE 2, 1986

AFTER THE PARTY

February 1986 will be remembered as the month the despots fled. Jean-Claude Duvalier's departure, Ferdinand Marcos's migration, and especially, Corazon Aquino's ascendancy instilled hope in the hearts of democrats in this country and around the world. But the jubilation we felt a few months ago is quickly dissipating as concern about unglamorous social and economic woes replaces the initial feeling of euphoria. That's understandable—the party can't continue forever. But rather than wishing Mrs. Aquino and General Namphry good luck and slipping out the back door, we should stick around and help them clean up the mess.

Our stake in the success of both of these new governments is enormous. Despite arriving late on the scene, we played an essential role in each country's transition to democratic rule. At the crucial moments, the Reagan administration made it clear to the endangered tyrants that we wouldn't prop them up any longer. We provided the planes, and convinced Baby Doc and the Marcos entourage to get on board. The leaders who replaced the despots each represented legitimate "third force" options in countries where some knee-jerk conservatives said the only alternative to right-wing despotism was communist tyranny.

Each of these orderly transitions ought to demonstrate the existence of a more sane, middle way. But we haven't proved our case just yet. Haiti and the Philippines are rightly regarded as experiments in the viability of democratic rule in the underdeveloped world. Our new goal should be to make sure the evidence supports our hypothesis.

Despite the surpassing importance of boosting the Aquino government in its infancy, President Reagan hasn't done enough to make his support clear to our newest ally. Secretary of State George Shultz became visibly angry when responding to Philippine vice president Salvador Laurel's recent contention that there were "cobwebs of doubt" hanging over Reagan's support for the Aquino government and his feelings about Marcos. Yet the Filipinos' qualms about the depth of our support are warranted. It was two months after the Aquino revolution before President Reagan bothered to telephone Mrs. Aquino, and even then he only spent a few brief minutes wishing her well. By contrast, when Reagan was in Hawaii, he spent an hour talking on the telephone to his old pal Ferdinand Marcos. To Philippine emissaries who have asked for more economic aid, Shultz has answered that they should grant Marcos a passport, and he has rebuked them for not being grateful enough for what we've already done. Shultz's fulminations and Reagan's nostalgia haven't demonstrated any deep personal commitment or much understanding of the emotional potency of the Marcos issue to the constituency that elected Aquino. Reagan himself seems to feel a bit nostalgic for the Marcos era and somewhat ambivalent about Aquino.

The Aquino administration is asking for quite a lot. Vice President Laurel said that his "child government" needs a grant of two billion dollars—for starters. The new ambassador of the Philippines to the United States, Emmanuel Pelaez, recently called for a new "Marshall Plan" to aid his country. In the age of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings, those are fighting words. Shultz got impatient with those comments as well, and responded that "we don't have an infinite capacity to provide money." The Reagan administration is

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proud of the fact that it hopes to provide $500 million in foreign aid this year, including $150 million in newly proposed funds.

That's actually not a bad start. Congress could help by not making foreign aid the first victim of Gramm-Rudman. Under the new budget law, it is almost impossible for Congress to vote new money for foreign aid. Cash has to be reallocated from another budget. In the case of the Philippines, the administration has offered to take the money from the Pentagon budget. Money for Haiti is likely to come at the expense of some other impoverished Third World country. Representative Walter Fauntroy has proposed $26 million in badly needed economic and military assistance (on top of $55 million already obligated this year). But no one has yet volunteered his ox to be gored for Haiti's benefit. Congress ought to recognize the imperative to spend in these countries, even in a period of fiscal austerity.

Congress can help even without further spending. The only hope for political salvation in either country is getting the economy back on a sound footing. The best way to help would be to lift our scandalous quotas on foreign sugar and textiles. These are the Philippines' two largest exports. Yet we allowed a mere $133 million in sugar and $271 million in Philippine apparel and textiles across our borders last year. In other words, we're not even willing to let the Philippines sell us as much as we give them in grants. What end does this kind of protectionism serve? Our sugar quota benefits 12,000 wealthy domestic producers, while doing serious harm not only to the Philippines but to the economies of many Third World nations, including the Dominican Republic. Keeping the price of sugar high also hurts American consumers by raising the average family's grocery bill $100 per year.

If we must have protectionism, our quotas should at least be waived for democratic governments we support. If President Reagan were a little smarter, he'd use this argument as a lever against protectionist sentiment in Congress. A proposal that we open our markets to democratic governments that respect human rights would be a tough one for the Democratic House to rebuff as it ponders the question of how restrictive to make its spring trade bill.

Another way we can help new democracies is with creative programs such as those sponsored by the National Endowment for Democracy. NED supported independent trade unions and election observers that were instrumental in effecting Marcos's ouster. By sponsoring nongovernmental democratic institutions such as independent trade unions, NED has arguably done more to promote democracy in Haiti and the Philippines for a few million dollars than the Agency for International Development has done by spending a hundred times as much. In Grenada, another nation where we have an opportunity to demonstrate the superiority of democracy, NED has supported an innovative voter-education project. The U.S. has spent nearly $1,000 per capita in Grenada since October 1983. We've begun to learn that you can't buy democratic institutions—you have to build them.

You're awfully unpopular if you recommend anything that costs money these days. But it's hard to think of a more worthwhile way for our government to blow another few hundred million. If ten years hence Haiti, the Philippines, and Grenada are examples of how democracy can flourish in the Third World, our money will have been well spent.

FOLLOW THAT NETWORK

In J. Bowyer Bell's book *The Secret Army: The IRA, 1916-1974* there is an extraordinary sequence of photos (not taken by Bell) titled "Bomb attack on Shipquay Street in Derry, 21 March 1972." The first picture shows three men leaning into the trunk of a car, "loading the bomb for delivery." The second shows a quiet Shipquay Street "moments before the explosion." The third is a picture of the same street, taken from the same angle, with the bomb exploding, people running for cover. The fourth and last picture is a close-up of "the damage done." There are no dead bodies in sight, but even if no one was killed, that could hardly have been known before the bomb went off. Was it naive of me, when I first came upon these photos, to feel that something was very wrong? Do I misunderstand the photographer's trade? What did this man think he was doing? Why didn't he call the police—or, at least, warn the people in the street? Overwhelmed with questions, I watched for reviews of the Bell book, but so far as I know no one said anything about this strange performance. To me it seems clear that the photographer was a terrorist accomplice. I'm not sure what to say about the silent reviewers.

All these questions came back to me when I watched the interview with Abu Abbas on NBC television last week. Here was a man wanted for murder calmly facing the camera and promising to commit more murders. That much was well worth seeing, on the general principle: know your enemy. But it is also important, as any military strategist will understand, to *know where your enemy is*. This knowledge NBC chose to conceal. The concealment was part of its bargain with Abu Abbas: he granted the interview on condition that NBC say nothing about where it took place, nothing about Abu Abbas's hideout or about the government that provides it. Maybe U.S. intelligence already has this information. If not, its agents should begin to follow NBC reporters.

Still, the concealment was an act of complicity, and if Abu Abbas keeps his promises, it will have to be said that NBC helped him do so. Does anyone think this is courageous journalism? Once the deal was struck, surely no American in the Middle East was safer than NBC's correspondent. Abu Abbas, after all, was getting exactly what he wanted, and had no reason to be angry. The rest of us, however, who are not terrorists have reason enough.

MICHAEL WALZER

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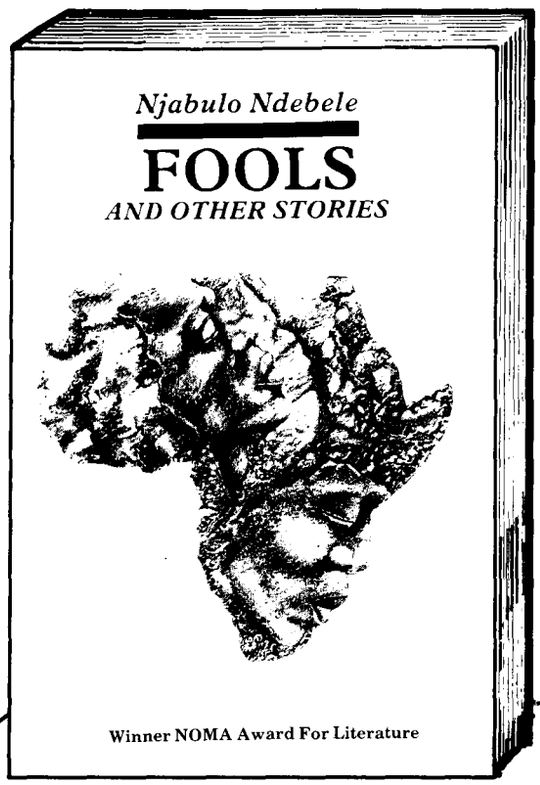

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To Bury Our Fathers by Nicaragua's Vice President and master novelist, Sergio Ramírez: 'Read slowly and carefully to appreciate & absorb all its nuances...Dr Ramírez is as important as the substantial literary merits of his book. (New York Times Book Review).

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NOTEBOOK

□ SLEAZEBALL WATCH AND DEBT HOAX UPDATE: Mexican president Miguel de la Madrid has hired the Hannaford Company, a lobbying and public relations firm with close ties to the Reagan administration (former name: Deaver & Hannaford), to promote his proposed "lasting solution" to the Third World debt problem. De la Madrid's four-point plan, presented in a Hannaford press release, is the usual combination of bromides ("improved international cooperation") and veiled blackmail threats ("de la Madrid questioned how long patience would continue among the populations of the debtor nations"), all amounting to a demand for more concessions from creditors. We note that de la Madrid does not address the problem written about in these pages seven weeks ago ("Where the Money Went" by James S. Henry, April 14): money has been leaving these countries—headed for private bank accounts—almost as fast as it gets pumped in. In fact, there have been reports (denied, of course) that de la Madrid himself has exported millions to a personal account in Switzerland. Hannaford's press release also fails to address a matter raised on the front page of the *New York Times* May 12: the tremendous growth in Mexican drug trafficking, often involving government officials. According to the *Times*, "Mexico scholars say Government corruption traditionally increases in the last two years of a President's term, and President Miguel de la Madrid leaves office in 1988."

□ WHAT TIMES IS IT?

White House Backing C.I.A.
On Prosecuting Publications

—*New York Times*, May 9

White House shuns Casey's proposal to prosecute press

—*Washington Times*, same day

□ DEPARTMENT OF BRAGGING: The American Repertory Theatre of Cambridge, Massachusetts, which is directed by TNR's theater critic, Robert Brustein, has won the 1986 special Tony Award for continued excellence in resident theater. You can watch him accept it on television June 1. David Seideman, who wrote and edited TNR's 70th anniversary issue and book, and who has been our resident expert on the magazine's history for six years, is the author of *The New Republic: A Voice of Modern Liberalism* (about the magazine's early years), just published by Praeger Press. Gertrude Himmelfarb's *Marriage and Morals Among the Victorians*, including three essays first published in TNR, recently appeared from Knopf.

□ WHEN IS A TERRORIST NOT A TERRORIST? "Israeli security forces yesterday captured Syrian-backed guerrillas suspected of killing a British tourist in Jerusalem and of carrying out three other shootings in the holy city. . . ." So reported the *Philadelphia Inquirer* April 30. The word "guerrillas" was also used in the headline. A lot of words get spilled discussing what is terrorism and what is something else, but surely "guerrilla" is not the best description for someone who goes to a major tourist attraction, chooses a victim at random, and shoots him in cold blood. When said killer is a member of a group—described as "the breakaway Abu Mousa faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization"—that plots this kind of random political violence on a regular basis, the search for *le mot juste* becomes even easier. In another charming Orwellianism, the Associated Press dispatch describes this Abu Musa fellow as "a Syrian-backed *dissident* with guerrilla bases in eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley." Emphasis added.

□ THE DEATH OF a pregnant mother even in some large-toll human disaster always evokes some special melancholy. It seems somehow to cheat and threaten the great chain of being. The 16th victim of the May 3 Tamil terrorist bombing of the Sri Lanka airline died last week, and she was a pregnant mother. She was also the wife (and her baby the child) of a Palestine Liberation Organization official in the Maldive Islands, where the plane was headed. This is not divine retribution or, for that matter, justice of any sort. There is, of course, the macabre similarity between this enormity and the aborted bombing of an El Al plane leaving London by a pregnant woman haplessly packed off by her lover, also a Palestinian ultra, with explosives in her baggage. All of this is a grisly reminder of the derangements that the PLO let loose on the world—first as a weapon against the Jews—which now threaten everyone. For this, of course, those countries that for decades futilely conciliated the terrorists in order to be exempt from their scourge are largely responsible. There are, then, big ironies and smaller ones. Here's one of the latter: Tamil extremists are routinely trained and also supplied by the PLO.

□ THERE HAVEN'T been any demonstrations in the Soviet bloc countries against either the callousness that encour-

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aged the Russians to build particularly unsafe nuclear reactors in the first place or the contempt that kept them from alerting their neighbors and their own populace to the developing catastrophe once the Chernobyl facility exploded. And make no mistake about it, there won't be any such demonstrations. Most of the countries now living directly under irradiated clouds are, after all, precisely the ones in which protests against Soviet behavior land people in prison. What we've been waiting for, however, is some indication of concern for Europe's imperiled millions from the strontium 90 police in the West. With their highly touted contacts among Moscow's scientific and health elites, wouldn't their voices count now? Why have these self-appointed physicians to the bodies and souls of all humanity not done their customary handwringing before the TV cameras on this occasion? Don't they think that nuclear ghosts still haunt children? Or is it some shaking of their usual confidence in the goodwill of the transgressor that has them suddenly tongue-tied? Well, actually, Dr. Bernard Lown and Physicians for Social Responsibility, fearful of allowing Americans to fear the Russians, have publicly downplayed the seriousness of the Chernobyl episode. All the same, Drs. Luria, Wald, Lifton, Hiatt, Geiger, Chivian, Mack, and other esteemed colleagues, your silence is deafening.

□ YAWN: The winner of our boring headline contest (see TRB, page four) is Mark Lilla of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Sixty-seven people sent in nominations, most of them admirably dull. Our thanks to all who participated.

On The Hill

Bradley's Triumph

AT HIS MOMENT of maximum public embarrassment last month, Republican senator Bob Packwood approached the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation with a question. "How does Bill Bradley do it?" he asked. Packwood, the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, was desperate. He was responsible for a tax-reform bill that had become a lobbyist's dream, peppered with more special-interest loopholes than ever. It could never pass. Reagan administration officials agreed with him on this. A fresh approach was needed, and Bradley, the Democratic senator from New Jersey, had one. Only Packwood didn't quite fathom how Bradley's plan worked. "How does Bradley get the rates so low?" he asked.

Packwood got a quick lesson in the politics of real tax reform. To get the top individual rate down to 30 percent, as Bradley did, you had to jettison popular deductions, even some sacred cows. Bradley would eliminate capital gains, tax fringe benefits, limit the mortgage interest write-off, drop the deduction for consumer interest, and tighten the tax on life insurance. Packwood asked for a full list, and he took it with him when the Finance Committee gathered in a private back room on April 25. He recited the list to show what tough choices might be made to push rates down. Then he introduced his own bill (top rate 25 percent, no itemized deductions), a sharp departure from the legislation the committee had been drafting. Swallowing hard, Packwood acknowledged his error. "Bill Bradley was right," he said.

GIVE PACKWOOD credit. Fearing political disaster for himself and the Republican Party, he boldly reversed himself. But give Bradley more credit, a lot more. He showed Packwood the way. Bradley, having won reelection overwhelmingly in 1984 while calling for lower rates and fewer deductions, was a model of political success. And he was a moral force on the committee, like a monk holding the cross of tax reform in the face of a vampire. On May 6 the committee dispatched a bill (top rate 27 percent, few deductions) to the Senate floor, where its prospects are good. "This couldn't have happened without Bradley," says an administration official.

Tax reform itself couldn't have happened without Bradley. He created the political context for it, says Richard Darman, under secretary of the treasury. "He set the agenda," adds Jeffrey Bell of Citizens for America, a conservative grass-roots organization founded by Lewis Lehrman. Bradley, remember, introduced his own proposal, cosponsored by Representative Richard Gephardt, back in May 1982. It had three rates for individuals (the top at 28 percent) and a paltry set of deductions. At the time, President Reagan was talking glowingly to aides about a single flat rate for individuals, but ridding the tax code of shelters wasn't on his mind. Representative Jack Kemp was resisting pressure from advisers to propose a tax-reform measure of his own. Once Bradley stepped forward, Reagan and Kemp followed. In his State of the Union address in January 1984, the president ordered a Treasury Department study of tax reform. In May 1984 Kemp unveiled his 25 percent flat-tax scheme. In December 1984 Treasury put out a tentative tax-reform bill, top rate 35 percent.

Bradley came to tax reform the way Reagan came to tax cuts—through personal experience. Reagan made only four movies a year in the 1940s because, he has often claimed, marginal tax rates were too high to bother earning any more. Bradley, an All-America basketball player at Princeton, learned about taxes when he joined the professional New York Knicks. "Tax laws provide owners with loopholes big enough to drive a Sherman tank through," he wrote in his iconoclastic book about pro basketball, *Life on the Run*. If you buy a team for ten million dollars, you can declare the players, a depreciable asset, to be worth $7.5 million, the franchise $2.5 million. But in selling the team, you can peg the franchise at $7.5 million, the players at $2.5 million. Why do this? The franchise would be taxed at the

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lower capital gains rate. This was "truly outrageous," Bradley wrote. "I was not only an entertainer but a depreciable asset."

When he signed his first pro contract, Bradley got a rundown on his tax options from a lawyer. "I could take my pay as salary, or defer all or part of it, or take it as property, or take it as a long-term consulting contract, or take it as employer-paid life insurance and pension plans, or take it as payment to my own corporation, or take it . . ." Bradley decided to skip the shelters and take it as salary. When he was running for the Senate in 1978, his GOP opponent, the same Jeffrey Bell now with Citizens for America, checked Bradley's net worth and tax statement. He was astonished to discover that Bradley had paid at the top rate on earned income, 50 percent. "He's the only guy I've ever heard of who paid up to the maximum rate," says Bell. "He didn't shelter anything."

BRADLEY HAS STUCK to a few simple principles on tax-reform legislation: the lowest possible rates for the greatest number of people, neutrality in distributing the tax burden among income groups, revenue neutrality. He sought in vain to get the Democratic presidential candidate, Walter Mondale, excited about tax reform. When Bradley and Gephardt conferred with Mondale in Minnesota in August 1984, White House officials feared Mondale would drop his pitch for a tax hike and campaign for tax reform. This, in turn, would have forced Reagan to disclose his tax plans for his second term. Who knows what trouble that might have led to? But Mondale wasn't buying. Bradley, undeterred, next latched onto Representative Dan Rostenkowski, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. Tax legislation must originate in Ways and Means, and Bradley flew to Chicago in November 1984 to confer with Rostenkowski. "I wanted to make sure we were on the same wavelength," he said. On tax reform, they were. While Ways and Means considered tax reform last year, Bradley lobbied wavering representatives. When it appeared that no bill would emerge, Rostenkowski summoned Bradley to give committee Democrats a pep talk. He told them the worst thing they could do to Senate Republicans was send over a reform bill. Republicans don't like tax reform, he said, but they want Democrats to take the heat for killing it. Soon, Ways and Means passed a bill.

In the Senate, Bradley pushed Democrats into endorsing his principles of tax reform on February 25. New taxes, such as an oil import fee, couldn't be used to protect old loopholes, the Democratic caucus agreed, 31 to three. Even Senator David Boren of Oklahoma, no fan of tax reform, joined the resolution, after Bradley added a statement that "any tax-reform bill should enhance our ability to compete in the world marketplace." There was a message in this for Republicans: should tax reform die, Democrats won't take the blame, you will. When the Finance Committee finally took up the issue, Bradley joined other members in trooping into Packwood's office for a one-on-one session. The drill was to ask for goodies you wanted in the bill. Bradley argued for his tax-reform principles, and asked for one New Jersey goody: making toxic waste disposal facilities eligible for industrial development bonds.

That tax concession was absent from Packwood's initial reform bill, which had a top rate of 35 percent. Bradley was irritated. Once the committee began considering the bill, relations between Bradley and Packwood grew testy. When lobbyists asked Bradley to back some tax item, he told them his support would just hurt them with Packwood. Bradley's tax aide, Gina Despres, quit going to meetings of committee staffers. Bradley made a stink about lucrative and unnecessary write-offs for the oil, gas, mining, and timber industries. He forced four votes, and lost all of them. Only four of the 20 committee members sided with him. As the bill got worse and worse, Despres concluded that tax reform was dead, though Bradley held out hope.

Then came Packwood's deathbed conversion. Bradley was invited to join a core of six senators, including Packwood, that worked up a new bill. Bradley says that "the power of an idea," namely lower rates and fewer deductions, had taken over. "Lower rates have an enormous appeal. It shows the power of an idea when persistently advanced can overcome the special interests." Well, almost. Bradley bristled when the committee, meeting in private session, proposed to continue a tax preference for the oil and gas crowd. Packwood feared Bradley would bolt, jeopardizing passage of the bill on the Senate floor. "Bradley didn't exactly say he'd walk, but he was acting that way," says a participant in the meeting. The issue was brought to a vote, and Bradley lost, 11 to nine. But when the full bill came before the committee in public session, Bradley voted yes. He'd taken tax reform too far to drop out now.

FRED BARNES

The Senate waffles on the IRA.

KILLING CONFUSION

THE ISSUE IS murder. The question is whether the United States should embrace the proposition that murderous violence in pursuit of political goals is permissible in a functioning democratic society. That is, if you cannot win a fair election, and you cannot persuade elected officials to see things your way, do you then have the right to shoot and bomb those government officials? Or should you be put in jail for that kind of "political activity"?

The answer seems pretty obvious. But the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is near-to-evenly divided on it, with an unlikely coalition including Jesse Helms, John Kerry, Joe Biden, Chris Dodd, and Claiborne Pell taking the view that the U.S. should allow convicted murderers from Britain to remain free in the United States if their crimes were committed for ostensibly "political" purposes.

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Helms is a sovereignty obsessive, who opposes treaty obligations of almost all sorts. He opposed the Genocide Convention for years because he thought it would require the extradition of Americans to kangaroo courts in foreign despotisms. The Democrats' motivation is harder to fathom.

ON MAY 2, 1980, one Joseph Patrick Thomas Doherty, a 25-year-old volunteer in the Provisional Irish Republican Army, broke into a house in Belfast with three Provo confederates, seized three people at gunpoint, and prepared an ambush for a British army convoy they expected would shortly pass by. When a plainclothes counterinsurgency unit of the army arrived unexpectedly outside the house instead, the four men attempted to flee. Doherty, according to his own subsequent testimony, shot and killed Herbert Westmacott, a young captain in the British army. All four Provos were captured. Doherty was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. But two days before sentencing, he and his codefendants overpowered their prison guards with smuggled weapons and escaped. The other three were subsequently recaptured. Doherty came to America. On June 18, 1983, 18 months after he'd entered the country illegally, Doherty was arrested by federal agents in a bar on Manhattan's Upper East Side. The British have requested that he be returned to serve his sentence for the murder.

On December 12, 1984, in New York, Federal District Court judge John E. Sprizzo ruled that Doherty did not have to be shipped back to Britain because the murder—which he does not deny committing—was "one of a political character." The Anglo-American extradition treaty, like most such bilateral arrangements, includes a clause stating that individuals will not be sent back to stand trial or be imprisoned for political offenses. The judge said the facts in the Doherty case "present the assertion of the political offense exception in its most classic form."

Doherty's lawyers claimed that his crime was political because there is an "ongoing insurrection" in Northern Ireland against British rule; because he was an established member of an organized paramilitary organization; because the act in question (the murder) was not motivated by any personal greed or animosity; and because the action was not "wanton," in that it did not endanger civilians and was of a nature consistent with accepted rules of civilized war. Sprizzo accepted this interpretation of the political offense exception, noting that it was beyond his ken to adjudge the merits of the political dispute—although he did examine the judiciary in Northern Ireland and found it fair, apolitical, and professional. In effect, the judge said that since an insurrection exists in Northern Ireland (where a minority of the minority Catholic community supports the armed struggle against British rule), criminal acts committed by self-styled "combatants" must be considered "political offenses" as long as they are not so wanton as to constitute war crimes, such as in indiscriminate killings of civilians. He reasoned, if that is the right word, that Westmacott's death "occurred in the context of an attempted ambush of a British army patrol. . . . it was the British army's response to that action that gave rise to the death of the British officer."

Amazingly, Sprizzo did not even address the question of whether resorting to violence is less justifiable in a democratic society than in one that offers no avenues of peaceful change. Perhaps it's just as well the good judge avoided the issue. Another federal judge recently did consider this question, in a similar case involving another Provisional IRA gunman, and came to the rather startling conclusion that it doesn't matter. Judge Stephen Reinhardt of the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals, in San Francisco, said in February: "It is not our place to impose our notions of civilized strife on people who are seeking to overthrow the regimes in control of their countries. . . . It is the fact that the insurgents are seeking to change their governments that makes the political offense exception applicable, not their reasons for wishing to do so or the nature of the acts by which they hope to accomplish that goal."

NOW, THIS IS cuckoo reasoning. It means that a democratic government is no more legitimate an embodiment of sovereignty—no more entitled to the protection of the rule of law—than a totalitarian state or a despotism. It means that if you lose an election, you can declare war on the winner and find refuge in the United States when the law-enforcement authorities catch up to you. Consider what this logic could mean in our own country. In Puerto Rico, for instance, a small minority of people seek independence from the United States. They make their case in the familiar democratic process: speeches, advertisements, publications. Elections are contested on that basis. But advocates of Puerto Rican independence never win more than a steady five percent of the vote. Some have declared war on the U.S., and claim to have launched an uprising against American imperialism. On December 3, 1979, six months before Doherty shot Westmacott in Belfast, an attack on a U.S. Navy bus in Puerto Rico left two sailors dead and ten injured. The assailants have never been identified, although the paramilitary wing of the independence movement claimed responsibility. It seems clear, however, that if they were apprehended in London, and the reasoning of Judges Sprizzo and Reinhardt were applied by British authorities, the murderers would not be returned to face American justice.

Believing that the judicial interpretation of what constitutes a political offense for the purposes of extradition has gone seriously awry, the State Department and the British government last year negotiated a revision of the Anglo-American extradition treaty to clarify that violent crimes in either the U.S. or the U.K. ought never be considered political offenses protected from extradition. This is a normal process; laws are rewritten all the time when Congress thinks the judiciary has misinterpreted a statute. Yet the supplementary treaty has languished in the Senate for almost a year, and is increasingly a point of controversy.

The fundamental point that there is no legitimate recourse to violence for political ends in a democratic

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society—that extradition to Britain is a different matter than extradition to, say, Syria, Suriname, or South Africa—seems to be lost on some senators. "One person's terrorist is someone else's freedom fighter," opines Kerry. Dodd says, "The principle of political asylum has been an extremely important part of our history for 200 years. It has protected people of every color and stripe." Led by Joe Biden, the Democrats have proposed an alternative treaty explicitly providing that—even in a democratic society such as Great Britain—"insurgents" could murder a policeman or soldier and claim that this was an "offense of a political nature."

State Department officials, including Secretary George Shultz and legal adviser Abraham Sofaer, have charged that the Democrats' opposition is due to sympathy for the terrorists of the IRA. The British, too—rightly angry that their lonely support for President Reagan's raid on Libya is not being reciprocated with help in punishing terrorists through legal means—have taken to claiming that opposition to the treaty is due to "ethnic lobbies." The *Times* of London recently ran a headline bleating, "The Senators Who Side with IRA," over mug shots of Senators Biden, Dodd, Kerry, and Helms.

For Biden and Dodd, at least, this is near to slanderous. For years they have joined with other leading Irish-American politicians—such as Tip O'Neill, Ted Kennedy, and Pat Moynihan—in roundly condemning the murderous tactics of the Provisional IRA. Last year they co-signed the annual St. Patrick's Day statement of the congressional "Friends of Ireland," which declared that "political violence is morally abominable as well as inherently anti-democratic; there is no more place for it in Northern Ireland than there is in the United States." What could be clearer than that? Yet Biden, Kerry, Dodd et al. have offered no coherent explanation of why they now seem to believe that it is permissible to murder a policeman or a soldier in a free society. Dodd says: "If you go after a military barracks, I'm not sure, ipso facto, that it should be considered a terrorist act."

This is not to say that there aren't legitimate complaints about the state of affairs in Northern Ireland. The issue, however, is whether there is a peaceful constitutional process in place through which those grievances can be addressed. For all its shortcomings, Northern Ireland remains a democratically governed community. Moreover, the prospects for meaningful progress on the principal grievances have been enhanced since last year, when the British and Irish governments reached agreement on a new arrangement for Northern Ireland. And clear majorities, in both Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland, have consistently rejected the men of violence in elections.

THE DRAFT treaty is not perfect. It includes a retroactivity provision that raises real civil liberties questions about ex post facto law-making and double jeopardy for those whose cases have already been decided. It also would allow suspects to be extradited for foreign crimes after the statute of limitations would have expired if the crime had been committed in this country. But these problems can be fixed. The heart of this debate, it is increasingly clear, is whether violence is admissible as a means of political expression in democracies.

The Irish Republic extradites murderers to Northern Ireland for punishment. The U.S. should do as much.

THOMAS O. MELIA

Thomas O. Melia is associate director of the Free Trade Union Institute. He wrote about the Anglo-Irish accord on Northern Ireland in the December 2, 1985, issue of TNR.

The liberal case for Packwood's bill.

GET ON BOARD

ALL YEAR I've been telling anyone who'd listen that political reality would force the Senate Finance Committee to report out a bona fide tax-reform bill. Even so, I've been pinching myself in disbelief ever since the committee actually did it. Indeed, some liberals may wonder whether Senator Bob Packwood's last-minute flip-flop in favor of real tax reform is simply too good to be true.

Over the next several weeks, the shocked interest groups whose oxen are gored by the committee's reform plan will be trying to exploit liberal doubts as part of their last-ditch effort to undermine the bill. Here are some of the arguments we will be hearing—along with the reasons why we should discount them.

A tax code with a top rate of just 27 percent can't be progressive.

What's so great, you might ask, about a tax-reform plan that taxes a hardworking professor or a two-earner blue-collar family making $45,000 a year at the same marginal rate as a plutocrat living off a million dollars in investment income? That indeed is what the Finance Committee tax plan would do. And certainly a good case can be made that such a tax system is not progressive enough. But even with that low top rate, the Senate plan is unarguably more progressive than the tax system we have now.

The key is effective rates. The Senate Finance bill chooses comparatively low but tough-to-dodge tax rates over the steeply graduated rate structure we have now—an ostensibly "progressive" system that has been destroyed by the plethora of tax-avoidance mechanisms available to those with access to knowledgeable accountants and tax lawyers.

Since the late 1970s, the federal government has been taxing more and more of the income of the worst-off and less and less of the income of the wealthiest. Inflation has brought millions of low-income families onto the income tax rolls, while eroding the value of the "earned-income tax credit." As a result, the total income-and-Social-

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Security-tax rate on a poverty-level family of four has ballooned from just under two percent in 1979 to 10.5 percent this year. Quite literally, the current system taxes people into poverty.

Meanwhile, bigger capital gains exclusions and the boom in tax shelters (made possible largely by the over-generous depreciation rules in the 1981 tax act) have exempted an increasing portion of the income of the richest Americans from taxation. On average, about half the income of people earning more than $200,000 a year is now tax-exempt.

The Finance Committee bill reverses this trend. Six million poor working families will be taken off the income tax rolls through increases in the standard deduction, the personal exemption, and the earned-income tax credit. The combined income-and-Social-Security-tax burden on a poverty-level family of four will fall back to 2.6 percent. And although the Finance Committee bill cuts the top tax rate, it dramatically increases the portion of rich people's income that is subject to tax. Ending the special treatment of capital gains—long a tax reformer's dream—will by itself bring almost a quarter of the income of families making more than $200,000 a year back on the tax rolls. The radical restrictions on using tax-shelter "losses" will add another ten percent or so. Along with other changes, the result is that the highest-income taxpayers—even though their *marginal* tax rate is reduced, in accordance with supply-side precepts—end up paying a slightly higher share of the individual income tax burden than they do now.

The loss of tax subsidies for low-income housing, and of real estate tax breaks in general, will lead to less housing and higher rents for poor and working people.

The real estate lobby would love to get liberals to believe this. The scare stories they're trying to spread about low-income housing are totally without foundation. Special tax breaks for construction of low-income housing are a good illustration of the general rule that "incentives" for rich people are an inefficient way to help poor people. Tax shelters for the rich have not produced much in the way of real shelter for the poor. In fact, real estate tax breaks have done almost nothing for the construction of rental housing—low-income or otherwise. Since 1972 private investment in new multifamily housing has dropped by 38 percent (in constant dollars).

RATHER THAN going into more rental units, the tax-shelter money has flooded into existing structures and new commercial buildings, investment in which increased by more than half since 1972. That's why the nation has such a huge stock of empty office buildings and why many major cities are plagued with downtown vacancy rates of 20 percent or more. The few tax-shelter dollars that have found their way into low-income housing have been mostly wasted. The front-loaded tax breaks have allowed builders and developers to take the subsidies and then quickly convert the units away from low-income uses. The winners have been wealthy tax avoiders rather than the poor.

The Senate tax plan actually includes giant increases in the special breaks for low-income housing. A new tax credit in the bill would pay for up to 80 percent of the cost of constructing low-income units. But unlike the present front-loaded tax breaks, the new credits would be doled out over ten years. And the developer or owner of the housing, to avoid having to pay back the subsidies, would have to maintain it as low-income housing for 15 years. Nevertheless, this new scheme is, if anything, still too generous—exactly the opposite of what the real estate lobby would have you believe.

Limits on Individual Retirement Accounts will hurt working families.

This canard is being spread by the banking industry, which stands to lose billions in IRA accounts. In fact, the bill would increase retirement security for working Americans. The bankers would have you believe that IRAs are the universal retirement savings plan of middle-income people, and that the Senate plan would penalize these hardworking savers by taking away their one tax shelter under current law. The fact is that almost two-thirds of the money put into IRAs comes from the top 20 percent of taxpayers. Households reporting more than $100,000 in adjusted gross income are almost ten times as likely to have set up an IRA as are families with incomes below $30,000, less than eight percent of whom have one. The average IRA contribution for families making under $30,000 was only $143 in 1983, compared with $2,032 for taxpayers with adjusted gross incomes over $75,000. And of course that $100,000 taxpayer saves 50 cents in taxes for every dollar he puts into an IRA, compared to as little as 11 cents for taxpayers in lower brackets.

Although huge sums of money have flooded into IRAs—an estimated $50 billion last year—the personal savings rate has actually declined in recent years, down to only 4.6 percent of disposable income in 1985 (the lowest level since 1949). Instead of coming from new savings, the money going into IRAs has been transferred from other savings accounts (or in some cases even borrowed).

The Senate plan restores some fairness and coherence to the retirement savings rules. Workers not covered by a pension plan will still get deductions for IRA contributions. At least half of the taxpayers who lose eligibility for IRAs will be able to make the same kind of retirement savings in 401(k) plans. But a new $7,000 ceiling on 401(k) contributions (down from $30,000) will prevent the gross abuse of these plans by high-income people. Finally, in a badly needed reform, the bill guarantees that those who are covered by a regular employer-paid pension plan will become entitled to benefits after five years on the job, instead of ten years under present law.

Tax reform threatens to sell out the economic well-being of America's industrial heartland.

This contention is a regional restatement of the oft-repeated claim by lobbyists for tax-avoiding corporations that tax reform would be "bad for business." However it's

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phrased, the notion that tax loopholes strengthen the ability of American industry to compete in world markets and stimulate business investment has been proved false by sad experience. Since 1981, when the big expansion in corporate loopholes was enacted, the United States trade balance has gone from a surplus to an annual deficit of more than $125 billion. The promised boom in business-equipment investment has been a bust. The kinds of capital spending that were supposed to be stimulated have grown at less than one-third the rate of increase during the previous five years.

An analysis by Citizens for Tax Justice, based on the annual reports of the corporations themselves, found that companies that paid no tax between 1981 and 1984 cut investment by four percent, cut employment by six percent, and cut exports by 15 percent—even as they embarked on a spree of mergers and higher dividend payouts and raised their top executive salaries by 52 percent.

As an "industrial policy," corporate tax loopholes have added $120 billion a year to the federal deficit, distorted investment decisions, and distracted corporate managers from the job of making better products. Like its House counterpart, the Senate tax plan moves toward restoring a level playing field to the American economy, so that investment and spending decisions are made on the basis of market realities rather than because of tax considerations. This has to be good news for economic growth.

The direction of both the Senate and the House tax-reform bills is toward taxing individuals and companies on what they really earn—not on some figment of their accountants' imaginations. For most of us, who already report most or all of our incomes on our tax returns, this is not a radical notion. But it will be a radical change for the tax avoiders in our midst—and it's a change that's long overdue.

ROBERT S. MCINTYRE

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Why Assad's terror goes unpunished.

THE UNTOUCHABLE

LIKE OTHER criminal masterminds, the sponsors of international terrorism want strategic victories, not notoriety. By that standard, Libya's Muammar al-Qaddafi is a bumbler. Syria's Hafez al-Assad, in contrast, has used terrorism with remarkable success to attain his goals. Not coincidentally, Syria is also likely to be spared bombing raids or even sanctions. Syria's strategic and military posture makes retaliation politically costly for the West. After all, Reagan profusely thanked Syria for helping to free the TWA hostages in the summer of 1985, despite U.S. intelligence showing Syrian involvement in Beirut car-bombings that killed close to 300 Americans and U.S. Embassy employees.

Syria uses international terrorism more effectively and with less risk than the other major purveyors—Libya, the PLO, and Iran—because it follows several important rules:

Employ terrorism for limited, well-defined goals rather than as a means of sparking revolutions. For Syria, this has meant maximizing its influence in Lebanon, destroying U.S. and Israeli leverage there, discouraging Jordan from making peace with Israel, weakening any PLO independent of Syrian domination, and blackmailing wealthy Arab oil-producing states.

Deploy terrorism in conjunction with diplomatic and military instruments and strategy. For example, terrorism, combined with the Syrian army's occupation in Lebanon and Assad's clever manipulation of internal politics there, allowed Damascus to outmaneuver the United States and maintain its hegemony.

Avoid publicity and refrain from boasting about involvement in terrorism. Organize sporadic incidents rather than a continuous offensive to avoid provoking sanctions.

Be strong enough in your own right and close enough to the USSR to deter military retaliation.

Syria learned these lessons through hard experience. Assad's adventurous predecessors gave open and energetic support to Palestinian terrorists in the mid-1960s. It was a major factor leading to the disastrous 1967 war with Israel and to the weakening of Syria's regional position. Assad, who took full power in early 1971, has been more careful and selective.

Lebanon provided the first test for Syria's strategic use of state-sponsored terrorism. The Syrian army entered Lebanon in 1975 and easily overpowered the indigenous militias engaged in civil war. But Assad realized that the conflict in Lebanon was too complex to be resolved and the country was too fragmented to permit total Syrian control except at a very high cost. Instead, he subsidized or punished various Christian, Druse, or Sunni and Shiite Moslem groups, depending on Syria's immediate goals. By playing them off each other, Syria prevented any faction from winning the civil war and preserved its own hegemony.

In 1976 Damascus apparently organized the murder of Kemal Jumblatt, the most impressive and independent of the "radical" side's leaders because he was seeking a total victory. Similarly, Syria was behind the killing of President Bashir Gemayel in 1982 because of his dynamism, his determination to produce a Christian military triumph, and his connections with the Israelis. The Syrian army also systematically looted Lebanese property and threatened citizens. As one Beirut witticism had it, a man went to the police to complain that "a Swiss soldier just stole my Lebanese watch." "Don't you mean," asked a police sergeant, "a Syrian soldier stole your

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Swiss watch?" The victim answered, "You said it, I didn't."

The most important use of Syrian-sponsored terrorism within Lebanon was to force the withdrawal of Israeli troops and U.S. Marines. At the least, the Islamic fundamentalist suicide bombers who attacked the U.S. forces and embassy in 1982-83 were allowed a free hand to train and mount their operation through Syrian-held territory. American hostages were also held in areas occupied by the Syrian army. Despite the anarchic conditions in Lebanon, it would have been impossible for these operations to have been mounted without Syrian knowledge and assistance.

Having forced a U.S. pullout, Syrian intelligence then turned its attention to southern Lebanon. Certainly much of the guerrilla and terrorist activity there since 1984 has been organized by Shiite extremist groups, some of them tied to Iran. At the same time, however, Damascus assisted some factions, particularly those of Syrian-controlled Palestinians, both as a way of striking against Israel and as a way of demonstrating that the pro-Syrian groups were more successful than those loyal to Yasir Arafat. Syria was also determined to destroy the May 1983 Lebanon-Israel peace agreement.

Some suicide bombers were even more closely tied to Syria. In July 1985, for example, a 23-year-old Lebanese named Haytham Abbas blew himself and his car up at a checkpoint of the Israeli-backed South Lebanese army. The day before he did so, Haytham Abbas gave a television interview, greeting Assad (whose picture could be seen on the table and the wall) and calling him "the symbol of resistance in the Arab homeland and the first struggler." Abbas was a member of the Lebanese branch of Syria's ruling Baath party.

AFTER THE RELATIVELY successful series of operations in Lebanon, Syria's main goal was to wipe out any PLO members who advocated serious negotiations with Israel or alliance with Jordan. Terrorism was the means. Many Americans do not understand that Syria does not reject Arab-Israeli negotiations merely because it wants to ensure the return of the Golan Heights or seeks better terms. Damascus's rejectionism runs deeper. Any solution is likely to strengthen Jordan's hand over the Palestinian question, free the PLO of Syrian influence, allow Israel to be a recognized state in the region (and hence a rival for Syria), defuse tensions, turn Syria into a second-rate power, and increase U.S. prestige. Since Damascus views Palestine as "southern Syria," Assad has explained that Arafat has no right to make any decisions that contradict Syria's views. In short, almost any conceivable solution is anathema to the Syrian government. Terrorism, then, is not a cry of outrage against a Western failure to pursue peace but an attempt to block diplomacy altogether.

Sadly, the more the United States pushes for peace, the more terrorism will increase. During the last three years, King Hussein has considered the Reagan plan and then forged an alignment with the PLO to pursue negotiations. These efforts broke down due in part to Syrian pressure through terrorism. In April 1983 PLO moderate Issam Suwas murdered in Portugal by Syrian agents. In October the Jordanian ambassadors to India and Italy and a Jordanian security man in Athens were killed. In December an attack in Spain killed one diplomat and wounded another.

In December 1984 former West Bank mayor and PLO executive committee member Fahd Kawasmeh was killed in Amman, eliminating a man considered friendly to King Hussein, showing that Jordan could not protect the Palestinian leaders, and serving as a warning to others. In April 1985 a rocket was fired at a Jordanian airliner taking off from Athens. In July the Jordanian airline's office in Madrid was attacked and a diplomat was killed in Ankara. In September a Jordanian publisher was murdered in Athens. The 1986 murders of Palestinian moderate Aziz Shehadeh in Ramallah and of Mayor Zahir al-Masri, a link between Hussein and Arafat, in Nablus could also be traced to Syrian surrogates.

THESE ASSAULTS were carried out by Palestinian terrorist groups linked to Syria. Most of the actions against Jordan were probably carried out by Abu Nidal and his operatives. Assad recruited Abu Nidal when he was forced to leave Baghdad in 1980. Although Abu Nidal had earlier staged operations against Syria, he was willing to accept the job. In the middle of 1985, he moved on to Libya but continued to cooperate with Syria. Syrian-sponsored PLO splinter groups led by Abu Musa probably had a hand in the attacks on the Palestinians in Jordan and on the West Bank.

Evidence is building that the attempt to smuggle a bomb onto an El Al jumbo jet bound for Tel Aviv from London was part of this series of operations. (Last week Britain expelled three Syrian diplomats implicated in the plot, because the Syrian government refused to waive their diplomatic immunity.) One can only surmise that if the attempt had been successful, it would have been claimed by pro-Syrian Palestinian groups. Since the PLO—not for lack of trying—has been unable to mount successful attacks against El Al, the destruction of the plane would have been a major victory for Assad's puppets in the terrorist competition that marks so much of Palestinian politics. Moreover, Syria's internal economic crisis—the oil price crash has drastically reduced subsidies from both Arab oil producers and Iran—is the worst in memory. A bit of Syrian-Israeli tension, Assad may have thought, would focus the people's anger against an external enemy rather than their own government.

BARRY RUBIN

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Earthquake victims as political pawns.

DISASTER, PART II

Mexico City

Mexico City's earthquakes on September 19 and 20 produced the worst disaster in the city's history—more than 20,000 killed, 100,000 left homeless—and a great outpouring of strength. Thousands of Mexicans suspended daily life for weeks to man shelters or dig through the rubble, some with their bare hands. The international response was just as rapid and strong. Within hours of the earthquakes, embassies and relief groups were offering millions of dollars in emergency equipment and reconstruction aid. The Mexican government promised to provide every family that lost its home with a cheap and decent new one. What was estimated to be a four-billion-dollar project, the largest reconstruction job since the Marshall Plan, seemed to be off to a good start.

But almost eight months after the earthquakes, the vast majority of those left whose homes were destroyed still have no place to live. The government built few permanent houses, and a program of decent temporary shelters is just getting started as the rainy season begins.

The *damnificados*, as the homeless are called, live in many places: with relatives, in the wrecked shells of their old houses, in government tent cities, in shelters of plastic, egg-carton cardboard, or salvaged wood in downtown parks, on sidewalks and in the center islands of some of Mexico City's busiest boulevards. On the sidewalk of *Circunvalación* street, a woman cooks over a small fire outside her shack. A plastic sheet serves as a roof and a bed sheet for a door. There is no electricity. The family uses a nearby outhouse and draws its water from a pump three blocks away. In a government shelter at a sports complex a few blocks away, a family of 12 lives with much of its salvaged furniture in a 15-by-ten-foot yellow plastic tent. The family eats in a communal soup kitchen and washes in the cold-water-only bathrooms. But at least they have electricity in the tent, and there are doctors in the camp.

The father of this family laughs when I ask when they will leave. "That's the question, isn't it?" he says. He adds that so far no reconstruction has started on the site of their destroyed home, and that he does not know how he will pay for a new house. The government is asking him to pay rent equal to 30 percent of his monthly salary, three times what he was paying before.

The Mexican government's promises to the *damnificados*, and its leisure in keeping those promises, are a reflection of Mexico itself: the country's pride and its desire to be seen as a developed nation, corruption, and above all, the obsession of the governing Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, to control every aspect of Mexican political life. Mexico has the longest record of democracy in Latin America—but it is a democracy in which no party other than the PRI has won an important election since 1929. Modern Mexico has rarely faced serious civil unrest, and yet its distribution of wealth and the sheer number of people in misery are among the worst in Latin America. Corruption and the PRI control such dissenting groups inside the system while ensuring that the powerless have no voice.

THE EARTHQUAKE set off a wide-ranging debate within the Mexican government, according to foreign relief officials. Finance Minister Jesus Silva Herzog wanted to use the disaster as an opportunity to reschedule the $94 billion foreign debt. Foreign Minister Bernardo Sepúlveda saw the earthquake as a showcase for Mexico's independence, development, and ability to handle its own problems.

Sepúlveda won. While other disaster-struck governments have treated catastrophe as a second Christmas, exaggerating the damage to get as much international relief as possible, Mexico did exactly the opposite. It has tried to minimize the damage, sticking to its estimate of 10,000 deaths—a half to a third of the estimate of almost every private group. Heavy U.S. Embassy pressure on Sepúlveda to request aid—necessary before Congress can appropriate money—came to naught. Frederick Cuny, a disaster specialist serving as a consultant to UNICEF, says he was part of an informal team asked by the U.S. Agency for International Development to see what Mexico needed. Congress was ready to give perhaps as much as $220 million, Cuny says, if the Mexicans would only request it. The request finally came six months and three days after the earthquake—three days after the deadline expired for U.S. disaster relief. By January the total direct contribution of the U.S. government, from search dogs to Nancy Reagan's one-million-dollar check, came to less than four million dollars.

Mexico's housing reconstruction plans were considered excellent. Instead of ignoring the *damnificados*, a strategy chosen by many disaster-struck Third World countries, the government decided to follow its usual practice of keeping Mexicans loyal and dependent by doling out services Mayor Daley style. The government promised each *damnificado* decent temporary shelter and a real new apartment—in many cases, a larger and better apartment than before—at the best credit it could offer. In a gesture intended partly to appease the left, President Miguel de la Madrid also expropriated 7,000 damaged properties. The government promised to absorb the cost of the land and of wrecking the damaged buildings, and then to turn the titles over to 42,000 *damnificado* families.

But the government did not have the money or the organization to keep its ambitious promises. Tent camps were set up, but many *damnificados* preferred not to budge

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from their street shelters right near their old buildings, where they could keep an eye on excavation of their possessions and remain close to still-buried family members and to their jobs. The government set up an agency called *Renovacíon Habitacional Popular* to rebuild homes in the downtown area, but for six months *Renovacíon* did practically nothing. It did not build one permanent home, and not a single family received an assurance of where it would live or how much it would pay. By April de la Madrid had sacked the head of *Renovacíon* and the secretary of urban development.

The crash in oil prices in April left the government with no money for reconstruction work, and Mexico borrowed $200 million from the World Bank. By late April—one month before 5,000 foreign journalists would invade Mexico City for the World Cup soccer championship—construction finally started in earnest. *Renovacíon* has said it will finish new houses for the 42,000 families under the expropriation order by February 1987, although half the money is slated to come from the national treasury, a fund that at the moment is largely imaginary. When the World Bank loan runs out, construction is likely to slow or stop.

To the *damnificados,* Mexico's big promises just made the accompanying corruption and delays all the worse. Many believe that their buildings had collapsed because of shoddy workmanship in the first place. Two 14-story apartment buildings, for example, had been so poorly built that even before the quake they leaned against one another. The government promised to repair the buildings, but the work had never been done—business as usual in a city where it is easier and cheaper to bribe a housing inspector than to pay an architect, engineer, and construction crew. During the first earthquake the two towers crashed against each other until they crumbled. At least 1,000 people were killed.

Planeloads of blankets and tents vanished, only to reappear on street corners for sale. One man whose apartment overlooks a damaged high-rise building says he watched soldiers—ostensibly there to prevent looting—steal dozens of TV sets and stereos. Even a nine-unit complex built in April by the Red Cross and the government appears to have been the victim of contractor skimming. The building is so short on mortar and reinforcement that engineers say it won't survive another quake.

IN MOST DISASTERS it takes a few months for the government to begin reconstruction. The gap is filled by voluntary groups such as UNICEF and Catholic Relief Services, which start programs almost immediately to help the hardest-hit. But the Mexican government, fearful it could not control the projects of the outside groups—and that Mexicans would watch privately funded buildings go up while the government dragged its feet—slapped a moratorium on all voluntary activity until the government program got under way. Only in late April did it allow voluntary groups to begin carefully specified work in a few neighborhoods.

From the government's viewpoint, though, the *damnificados* learned exactly the wrong lesson. *Damnificados* who didn't want to move to tent cities began establishing their own organizations, in the process politicizing people who had been rote PRI supporters in the past. Concepcion Villela, a 35-year-old housewife with gold teeth who is given to wearing smocks and housedresses, says she never thought about politics before the earthquake. Now she's a bit of a Holy Roller preacher about neighborhood organizing, and a director of *Amanecer del Barrio* (Dawn of the Neighborhood), a street settlement of 500 *damnificado* families. "A lot of people had confidence in the government before the earthquake," says Villela. "The government says, 'Don't move a finger, we'll do everything.' They haven't given us so much as a glass of water. We think their only interest is to scatter us so we lose force."

The group's president, Javier Garcia Chávez, explains that right after the earthquakes the newly formed group went to its representatives in the Mexican Congress with maps of their proposed temporary shelters, to request services. "No one gave us an answer," he says. "We went back every month. Finally, we just stole [the services]. We tapped electricity from the overhead posts and water from the underground pipes." The group is now working with UNICEF funds to rebuild some of its collapsed apartments.

Garcia Chávez says that one reason his group is organizing its own building projects is that the government threatened its members, telling several that if they stayed with *Amanecer* they would not be given the title to a new apartment. The congressional delegation denies this charge, but similar reports of government or party pressure to put the neighborhood groups out of business can be found all over the city.

THE POLITICIZATION of Mexicans after the earthquakes has extended beyond the *damnificados*—all the more remarkable because ordinary Mexicans have historically been content to get their personal bite from the system rather than to work for widespread change. But sit-ins and street marches were practically three a week in October. In one, 5,000 doctors marched on Los Pinos, the Mexican White House, to protest the closing of a hospital. A new union of seamstresses has formed and dozens of the poorest barrios have begun neighborhood organizations, in the process creating popular leaders independent from the PRI. What the government fears is not just that these groups will challenge the PRI but that they will aid the left: many of the marches, for example, have linked a moratorium on external debt payments to helping the *damnificados*. The earthquakes of September 19 and 20 lasted for only a few minutes apiece, but for Mexico's political system, their tremors continue.

TINA ROSENBERG

Tina Rosenberg wrote "Postcard Costa Rica: Miami South" in the April 14 issue.

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It's not either/or. We can have both.

STAR WARS AND ARMS CONTROL

BY PATRICK GLYNN

ON THE FACE of it, few arguments in the debate over nuclear strategy seem less reasonable than the contention that we should eliminate or curtail research on the Strategic Defense Initiative for the sake of arms control. In the first place, the argument runs counter to our recent experience. The chief political and strategic effect of SDI so far has not been in any way to undermine the arms talks but instead to resuscitate them. Even if SDI were not the only reason the Soviets ended their boycott of the arms control negotiations—and doubtless the Soviets had other considerations—it was almost certainly the major one.

But beyond that there are two basic points to consider: SDI is a research program conducted within the provisions of the 1972 ABM treaty; the Soviets are vigorously engaged in the same research. Indeed, the Soviet Union has been engaged in such research for a long time. It would seem, therefore, that to cut back on our research would simply be to risk ceding to the Soviets the advantage in technologies for strategic defense.

Will unilateral restraint on our part inspire reciprocal restraint on the Soviet side? Historically, this approach has a very bad record. When our defense spending dropped and the rate of procurement slowed in the wake of SALT I, Soviet defense efforts did not change. At the beginning of the strategic arms talks, both sides could be relatively confident of the integrity and security of their retaliatory forces. At the end of the SALT II negotiations, ironically enough, one side could not. By the early 1980s, two-thirds of the tripartite U.S. retaliatory force—land-based missiles and bombers—was at least physically vulnerable to a preemptive first strike. The effect of our self-imposed restraint during the 1970s was to permit a substantial shift in the strategic balance.

Perhaps it was wrong to expect the Soviet Union to follow our example. Perhaps the Soviets felt, even after they obviously had begun to edge ahead in certain categories of weaponry, that they were still catching up. It seems more likely that they saw no reason to forswear the goal of superiority, once it came into reach.

But behind the call for a curtailment of SDI lies a broader feeling—namely, the fear that new technologies will lead us to a more dangerous world. We have to admit that this is possible—though exactly how is not so clear. If nuclear missiles were about to rain in on us today, the average person would feel safer knowing that defenses were in place to stop at least *some* of them. And the opposite result is also possible: technological advances might conceivably make us safer. For example, defenses capable of destroying 90 or even 70 percent of incoming missiles and warheads in flight would clearly diminish the gross destruction that could be accomplished by nuclear war. Such a defense might provide an answer to the problem of "nuclear winter"; certainly it is the only development on the horizon, technological or political, that holds out any hope of doing so.

But at issue here are in fact two separate questions, which tend to be confused. First, is a world with strategic defenses more dangerous than a world without them? Second, is a world in which the Soviets gain an advantage in defenses against nuclear missiles more dangerous than a world in which both sides stay abreast in defensive research or in which the U.S. stays ahead?

The answer to the second question would seem obvious. Already our land-based missiles and bombers are physically vulnerable to preemptive attack. If technology is capable of developing extremely effective defenses against missiles, it may someday render our submarines detectable at sea. If that were to occur, strategic defenses would be the *only* means to ensure deterrence. Even in the absence of such a catastrophic development, a Soviet advantage in defensive capabilities, combined with the clear advantage the Soviets now enjoy in counterforce capability, would pose a grave threat. Clearly a world in which we stay abreast or, better, ahead of the Soviets in strategic defense technologies will be safer than a world in which the Soviets gain a unilateral advantage.

To the other question—whether a world with defenses would be more dangerous than a world without them—the answer must be more speculative. From the standpoint of traditional thinking about deterrence and stability, the key issue is simply whether defenses have the effect of reducing offensive-force vulnerabilities. The United States will almost certainly be capable of providing "point defense" of missile sites and command-and-control systems long before it can provide a general defense for cities and U.S. territory. "Point defense" of weapons sites, as arms control theory makes clear, is a stabilizing influence, because it renders one's retaliatory capability more secure against preemptive attack. Indeed, as Thomas C. Schelling, one of the architects of modern arms control theory, pointed out in a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, the ABM treaty limitations on point defense were "incom-

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Patrick Glynn is writing a book titled *Closing Pandora's Box: A Critical History of Arms Control* for New Republic Books.

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patible" with arms control "philosophy," because such limits do not by themselves enhance stability. According to Schelling, they arose not from any arms control imperative, but "probably" as a result of "political necessity."

Even under a complete "Star Wars" umbrella, the crux of deterrence would survive. The very fact that even the most advanced and ambitious strategic defense is likely to be no more than 90 to 95 percent effective—if that—means that a few warheads will always be able to get through on both sides. In effect, in terms of gross destruction, nuclear attack under such putative "Star Wars" umbrellas, no matter what the size of offensive arsenals, would still be at least as risky for an aggressor as it was, say, in the early 1950s, when comparatively few atomic bombs existed. Assuming that only a small fraction of the total warheads could get through, one would have, in effect, "minimal deterrence" without the accompanying threat of climactic catastrophe and the corrosive sense of psychological and political vulnerability on the Western side that has attended the regime of "mutual assured destruction." At the same time, the requirement of stability would be met as long as weapons sites were relatively well protected and opportunities for successful preemption—i.e., for utterly debilitating the opponent's retaliatory force—had thereby been removed.

The notion that an attacker would strike first, hoping that his defenses could handle a weakened retaliatory strike, depends on an illogical assumption—namely, that defenses somehow fail to reduce the vulnerability of retaliatory forces themselves. At present, people dismiss the "window of vulnerability" phenomenon on the grounds that the Soviets could never be confident of destroying enough of our land-based force to make such preemption tempting—even though our forces are physically entirely exposed. How much more uncertain would the results of such a preemptive strike be in the presence of even moderately effective defenses? Indeed, it is difficult to see how one could design defenses that did *not* multiply the uncertainties involved in planning a preemptive attack.

A MORE FUNDAMENTAL question remains: Is it genuinely possible to stop the advance of technology through arms control agreements? What if we succeed in stopping technology only on one side—ours—and not on the other? Bans on research, as everybody knows, will be impossible to verify. But more than that, any limitation on testing and development is likely to work asymmetrically in the Soviets' favor because of the tendency of the United States—and democracies generally—to "over-comply" with arms agreements, even as totalitarian regimes (to put the problem euphemistically) "under-comply." U.S. and Soviet behavior with respect to the 1972 ABM treaty is illustrative. Within three years of the treaty, Congress had voted to dismantle the only existing U.S. ABM site. Between 1971 and 1975, research appropriations for ballistic missile defense were cut by a factor of seven (*excluding* the operational costs of the one ABM site). Soviet spending and research on ballistic missile defense, meanwhile, continued to grow apace—to the point where the Soviet Union is now building and deploying ABM components in violation of the ABM treaty.

One sees this same asymmetry at work in the present SDI debate. In the same well-known *Foreign Affairs* article in which McGeorge Bundy, George Kennan, Robert McNamara, and Gerard Smith fervently press the Reagan administration to abandon "Star Wars"—a research program conducted entirely within the bounds of the ABM treaty—the authors make excuses for the Soviets' construction of the Krasnoyarsk radar station, a literal and obvious violation of the treaty. The first major verification trip-wire of the ABM treaty has already been triggered, and Bundy and his co-authors are urging *both* U.S. condonation on Soviet noncompliance *and* a curtailment of U.S. ABM research.

MORE APPEARS TO be at stake in this debate than a coolheaded assessment of our strategic needs. One suspects that the choice we are debating is at bottom largely a symbolic difference in moral attitudes. Confronted with what Schelling characterizes as a choice between "Star Wars" and arms control, he has argued recently for arms control without SDI, based on what amount to moral grounds. He writes in *Foreign Affairs* that

> a prudent restraint from aggressive violence that is based on acknowledgment that the world is too small to support a nuclear war is a healthier basis for peace than unilateral efforts to build defenses. I like the notion that East and West have exchanged hostages on a massive scale and that as long as they are unprotected, civilization depends on the avoidance of military aggression that could escalate to nuclear war.
>
> Most of what we call civilization depends on reciprocal vulnerability. I am defenseless against almost everybody that I know, and while most of them would have no interest in harming me there must be some that would. I feel safer in an environment of deterrence than I would in an environment of defense.

These are striking statements coming from one of the major architects of arms control theory. They suggest something of the moral vision that has always been at the bottom of the idea of "mutual assured destruction." While most of us would agree that we consent to a certain vulnerability in our everyday lives (for example, walking dark streets at night), few of us like it or actively seek it out. Schelling is confusing the effects of civilization with the cause. We consent to vulnerability because of trust, and we trust because a certain order has been established, guaranteed by custom, by law, and ultimately by the jail cell and the policeman's baton. When this order fails to obtain, we understand it as a breakdown of civilization. In Schelling's formulation, the offer of vulnerability becomes the *source* of trust. True, there are relationships in which we gain intimacy and trust by offering vulnerability—with our spouses, our good friends. But the natural distinction

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between the "private" and the "public" or "political" realms lies partly in the fact that such intimacy is impossible in the latter. Schelling seems to be looking in politics for the kind of satisfaction people are lucky to find in marriage.

It is questionable enough to argue that we must accept as unavoidable the vulnerability of our society to a massive Soviet attack, when research, permitted to go forward, might render this vulnerability entirely avoidable. It is wholly perverse to embrace this state of vulnerability, as Schelling seems to do, as a positive moral good. As a practical matter, in a world where armed tyrannies remain, no nation that takes this view is destined long to survive, let alone to remain influential. Nothing will more quickly spell our doom than if we come to define "civilization" as a condition where liberty and tyranny are equally vulnerable to attack.

SDI is now sustained against a wide array of opponents by the president's prestige and public relations abilities. It is a fact of politics that any agreement to curtail SDI will not simply limit but destroy it. Those like Schelling who believe in mutual vulnerability for its own sake would mount a campaign to finish what the treaty had begun.

It is hard to see how a world with strategic defenses will be more dangerous than the present one. But that is not the choice that policy is probably in a position to make. To prevent strategic defenses from emerging (assuming that this were somehow a beneficial idea), we would have to be able to stop technology in its tracks, and to do so in a way that did not increase the dangers we already face. That means, to be safe, stopping technology from detecting ballistic-missile submarines as well as technologies for strategic defense. Even if this were desirable, it almost certainly cannot be done.

THE FACT IS that in controlling technology, past arms control agreements have had a very mixed record. Schelling points out that at the time of SALT I there were two new technologies to control: ABM and MIRVs. Unfortunately, the treaty managed partly to eliminate only one of them (and not coincidentally, perhaps, the one in which the United States would in the long run have had the clearest advantage—ABM). Commentators have subsequently complained about the absence of a MIRV ban, blaming it on lack of U.S. will. More was involved: any ban on MIRVs would have disproportionately hurt the Soviets because their advantage in "heavy" missiles gave them more warheads after MIRVing. Gerard Smith, the chief U.S. SALT negotiator, observed in his memoir of the SALT I negotiations that it was "far from clear" that the Soviets would have accepted even an attractive offer for a MIRV ban. Clearly, MIRVs contributed to instability; but so did the banning of ABM. It was in fact the *combination* of the ABM limitations (including prevention of effective point defenses) and the failure to ban MIRV that by the early 1980s left U.S. land-based missiles and airfields vulnerable to a preemptive strike into the indefinite future. One can blame either feature of the treaty, but the point is that the problem came from the combination of both, and that this was a characteristic result.

In practice, there is no such thing as a leak-proof or complete arms agreement. Every agreement is destined to overlook some category of weaponry, to leave several new avenues to danger unclosed. SALT I comprehensively limited strategic ballistic missiles, defining them arbitrarily as having a 5,500-kilometer range. Within a few years we faced an incipient crisis in Europe precipitated by a wholly new Soviet missile, the SS-20, uncovered by existing agreements. Its reported range: 5,000 kilometers.

The argument is sometimes made that without SALT things would have turned out worse for the United States. But given that the Soviets managed to ensure the vulnerability of the entire U.S. ICBM force but did so only by keeping their defense spending at a painful 12 to 14 percent of GNP, it is not self-evident that there was much more they could—or were in a position to—do. As a cure for the arms race, at any rate, modern arms control has always been a bit more like Novocain than penicillin: it has treated and disguised the symptoms without affecting the underlying cause.

IN SHORT, the choice that is within our power to make is a good deal simpler: it is not whether to stop technology, but whether to permit the Soviets to gain decisive technological advantages. What we confront is not a symmetrical decision between arms control and the Strategic Defense Initiative—though Soviet propaganda, and some domestic critics of SDI, try to make it seem that way. If we hold on to SDI, we can almost certainly keep both SDI and arms control. Agreements should be possible on a number of subjects—for example, not even the Soviets at present make unilateral abandonment of U.S. strategic defense research a precondition for an agreement on intermediate-range missiles. But if we somehow let go of SDI in hopes of advancing arms control, it is not clear that we will ultimately have either. We may have a new arms agreement, it is true; but one wonders what happens next. Any actual agreement will at best achieve reductions only in certain classes of weapons. From the standpoint of real disarmament, a huge amount of work would remain. What will we do the next time the Soviets boycott the arms talks? What will be our new "bargaining chip"? Having abandoned or restricted SDI, will we find ourselves surrendering again to that "heightened fear of nuclear war" that Leslie Gelb chronicled in the *New York Times Magazine* in March 1984? Will there be a new spate of TV movies like "Threads" and "The Day After" predicting nuclear incineration?

At the very least, we ought to be clear about what we will be bargaining away. To trade away SDI is to return, strategically and politically, to the conditions of 1979 to 1983. True, SDI does not yet solve the problem of vulnerability at the root of popular nuclear anxiety, but at least the program holds out some hope of eventually doing so. And it is necessary at the least to prevent our present and very real vulnerabilities from getting any worse. □

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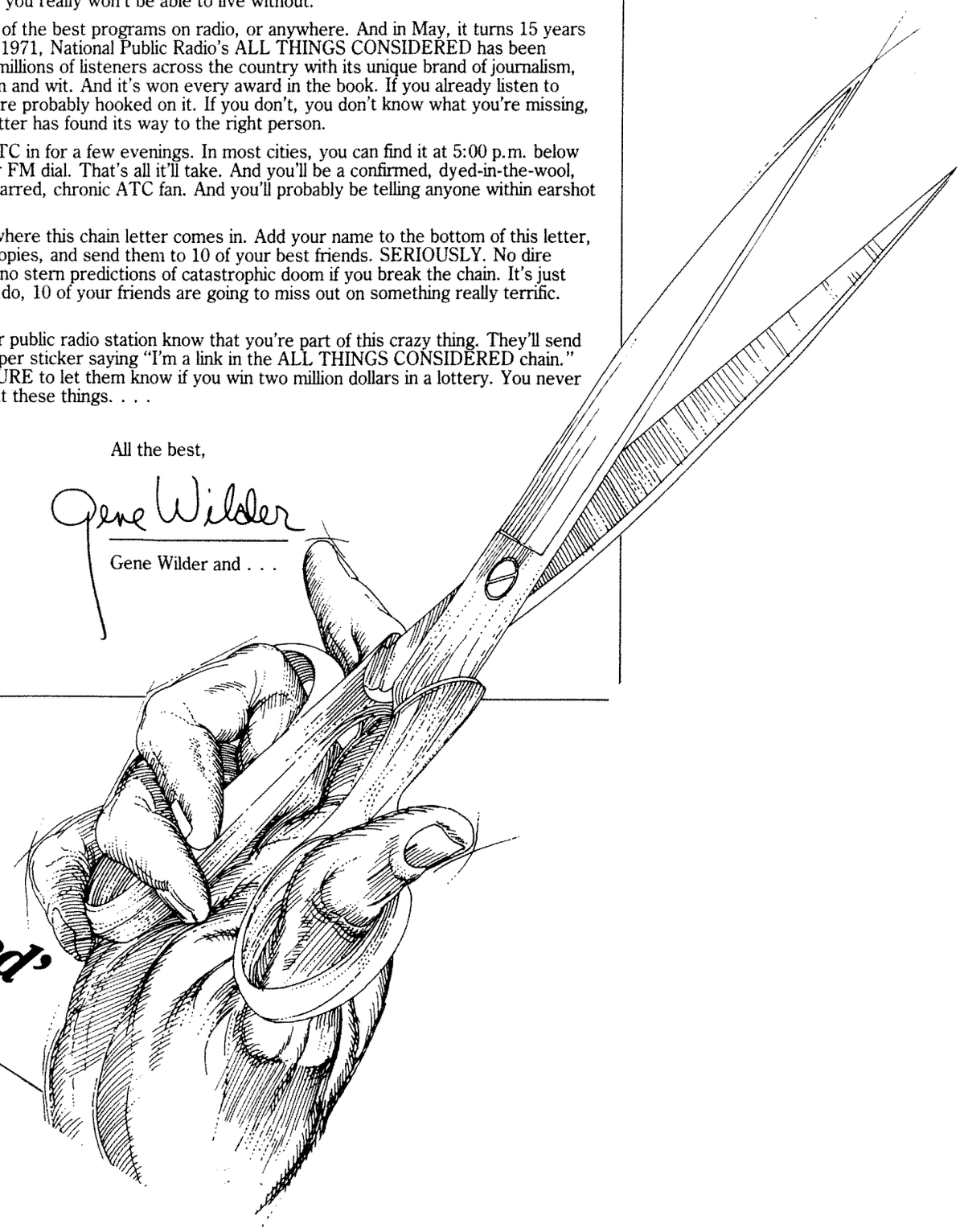

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Lower Depths

> I chose a character that eludes me. I don't say: "I know everything about Mona, I know her and I'm going to tell you two or three things about her." Mona is an enigma for all of us. I don't know any more than you do. . . .

Thus Agnès Varda on the protagonist of her new film *Vagabond*. (The French title translates as *Without Roof or Law*.)

Vagabond
(Grange Communications/
International Film Exchange)

Since the beginning of her career in 1954, with short films, Varda has been trying to make a cinema that is uniquely, identifiably hers, yet that is empirical and non-repetitive. With her first feature, *Cleo from 5 to 7* (1962), she showed that she was not quite an orthodox member of the heterodox New Wave. (Note the wry reference above to Godard's *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*.) Sometimes her liberation has been license for self-indulgence, as in *Le Bonheur* (1965). Sometimes the self-indulgence has inflated to the vapid, as in *Lions Love* (1969). But always she has been trying to make her films respond to her experience of the world and of imagination, as in the short film *Uncle Janco* (1967). In *One Sings, The Other Doesn't* (1977) she used her early experience as a still photographer to launch a chronicle of two women achieving womanhood. Besides her purely aesthetic concerns, a strong interest in radical politics has also been clear in her work. We might have expected this interest to color *Vagabond*, but it does so only to the extent that politics can never be completely absent from the work of anyone with eyes. Centrally, in this best Varda film that I know, she does exactly what she promises above: she *accompanies* a character; she doesn't explain.

Varda begins with the body of a young woman, lying in a ditch in southern France, frozen to death, splotched with wine stains. Then, with a series of flashbacks, each one launched by a statement of someone whom Mona encountered, Varda traces the last weeks of the life, not to explain the death but to confirm that it will not be explained. When *Vagabond* was finished, I remembered the gendarmes at the start photographing the body, measuring the width of the ditch. Those photographs and measurings crystallize the futility of explanation. The only hard information that society will ever have about Mona is the police file of data on the location and cause of her death.

The structure of the film itself is ironic. So many films begin with a corpse and flash back to unravel the causes of the death that we expect the same here. But Varda calmly deceives us: she uses the form but omits everything we expect from it. (I thought of Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, which has all the attributes of a mystery play except the clues and explanations.) We hear statements—almost given as testimony, addressed to the camera—by people whom Mona met, worked briefly for, hitched rides with, bummed around with, slept with, but we are never even sure that we know her real name. During one sequence she answers the questions put to her by a woman who gives her a lift, then says that she always gives the answers that she thinks the questioner wants. All we know is what we see: a very young woman with a pack on her back, dirty and unkempt. Several people mention her stench (though in our first flashback view, we see her bathing in the sea). If we want to infer spiritual dislocation, inner-directed social protest, post-1968 anomie, we are free to do so; but Varda, who as usual wrote her own screenplay, is rigorous in implying none of these things. All we know of Mona is that she is responsive to some people—most of whom we also find attractive—and repelled by others. She has no purpose in her vagrancy other than to have no purpose. Even that is too programmatic, as if she were a Thoreau derivative, resenting the world's busyness. She does not bother even consciously to have no purpose: she simply moves along. She washes a car when she needs a few francs; she bunks where she can; she sleeps with male derelicts when she chooses; she eats and drinks what comes her way. Even rape doesn't seriously distress her. One night, when she is camping alone in the woods, she is raped, and though she strenuously resists, the next day we see no effects of it on her.

She arouses interest, even affection, in some people. A professor, a woman, gives her a lift, takes her along for a day explaining her work with trees, feeds Mona, gives her money when they part, and later feels a pang at having let her go. Through a meeting with a man, Mona comes to know an 84-year-old woman who lives in a big house. She and the old woman get tight together on cognac, laughing at the nephew who inquires after his old aunt's health when she knows he's eager for her to die so that he can have the house. The ancient woman, lingering on one edge, and the

FILMS WORTH SEEING

My Beautiful Laundrette. Insinuatingly humane, funny, discursive, basically grim comedy-drama, well acted and directed. Pakistanis in London today. (Reviewed 4/7/86)

A Room with a View. E. M. Forster is nicely served, except for the leading actress. The grace and winsomeness of the Edwardian English in Italy and England adroitly rendered. (3/24/86)

Shoah. Making its way to more cities, towns, universities. Claude Lanzmann's nine-and-a-half-hour documentary about the Final Solution (shown in two parts) is one of the cinematic experiences of a lifetime. (10/28/85)

Turtle Diary. Harold Pinter's script, richly minimalist, is played perfectly by Glenda Jackson, Ben Kingsley, and Michael Gambon. Two Londoners convey sea turtles from an aquarium to freedom—an adventure wittily enlightening. (3/10/86)

SK

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young woman, lingering on another, sit together on a sofa, tipsy and hilarious. Then Mona lives with a soft-eyed Tunisian laborer and works with him in the vineyard where he's employed; she leaves only when his coworkers return from North Africa and force him to evict her. (And in all the posthumous "testimonies," the Tunisian is the only one who doesn't actually speak. He faces the camera as the other "witnesses" do, but he says nothing. After a moment he presses to his face a red scarf she left behind.)

Varda shows us that Mona doesn't even fit into conventional categories of difference. One of the posthumous "witnesses" is a goatherd, obviously a man of some cultivation who has apparently opted out of the rat race for the simple life; and this dropout deprecates Mona's mere wandering as withering. At one point we see Mona wander into a village whose streets are being emptied of people, whose shutters are being closed. Suddenly she is attacked by men in antlered masks and is smeared with the lees of the wine harvest in an old ritual. She hates it: she screams in fright. So neither is she an abandoned pagan. She is a paradox: someone who doesn't care enough either to be a dropout or to be wildly abandoned.

Every actor in the film is good, especially Macha Meril (the heroine of Godard's *The Married Woman*, 1964) as the tree expert, Yahioui Assouna as the Tunisian, and Yolande Moreau as an exploited housemaid. But the picture depends on the performance of Mona, and Sandrine Bonnaire is quietly, grimly perfect. Bonnaire was 18 when she played the role in 1985. She had first appeared in Pialat's *A Nos Amours* three years earlier and subsequently made four films, not shown here. Under Varda's direction, Bonnaire achieves something extremely difficult: she makes an apathetic character fascinating.

She has the advantage—this is far from a joke—of starting dead. Our first view of her frozen face is the image toward which everything we subsequently see is heading. It's not a novel device, but it's often used cheaply, heart-tuggingly. Here her death, which we know lies soon ahead, becomes an essential counterpoint to what we see of her life. Bonnaire, with high cheekbones, a straight mouth, a small stubborn chin, is like a hound on the scent, dead set for disintegration. In its tacit, contained way, this is acting of great intensity.

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Varda has placed her at just the right distance from us throughout. I can't remember one large close-up; most of the film is in medium shots and fairly long shots. Varda's camera seems studious much of the time, as if trying to understand, as we too are trying, but realizing, as we too realize, that no explanation will be found: the course must simply be run until it is over. Often, after Mona leaves a shot, Varda holds the camera there, then moves it slightly to focus on a concrete tower or a pile of sacks or a tractor—reiterating the objectivity of Mona's experience, the mere thingness of the things she sees.

Mona is a human being whose only reason to live is that she is alive and, with the bluntest animal instinct for survival, wants to remain alive. That instinct is everyone's ultimate reliance, but she is at that point already; and that is why her odyssey, wrapped in a taciturn poetry, is at the last frightening.

The doctrines of Ali Shariati and their defeat.

THE IMPOSSIBLE LIFE OF MOSLEM LIBERALISM

BY FOUAD AJAMI

IN DESCRIBING the fragile Russian liberalism of the mid-19th century and the difficult life of the liberal intelligentsia, Isaiah Berlin comes close to an accurate depiction of contemporary Moslem society. It was a world, Berlin writes, dominated by "three main factors": a "dead, oppressive, unimaginative government"; an ill-treated population, "sullen and inarticulately groaning, but plainly too weak and unorganized to act effectively in its own defense"; and between ruler and ruled, on a fragile, exposed space, a group of intellectuals, a political class

> conscious of being alone in a bleak world . . . conceiving of themselves as a kind of self-conscious army, carrying a banner for all to see—of reason and science, of liberty, of a better life. Like persons in a dark wood, they tended to feel a certain solidarity because they were so few and far between; because they were weak, because they were truthful, because they were sincere, because they were unlike the others. . . .

Between 1860 and 1917, the dilemma of Russian liberalism became insoluble. Caught between reaction on the one side and Jacobin-like terror on the other, the morally sensitive collapsed. They were repelled by the "hard faces to their right" no less than by the "hysteria and mindless demagoguery on their left."

Here, in a nutshell, is how the state of affairs has evolved in Iran, and in much of the realm of Islam of late. Vast stretches of the Moslem world have turned into slaughtering grounds: privilege on the one side, indiscriminate wrath on the other. The middle ground has caved in. A tentative Moslem liberalism reaching back in time to the 1850s and 1860s has suffered yet another devastating blow. For all the sincerity of the Arab and Moslem liberals—and so many of them have been men of great distinction and clear principles—they have been unable to hold their own, let alone carry their societies along. The best of intentions has never been good enough. After writing the pamphlets, after anxiously attempting to reconcile the European heritage the liberals saw and admired with the world of their elders and with the popular culture below, the liberals have time and again lived to see yet further evidence that their own world has eluded them.

At every turning point, when the dust settled, the battle was won by men—soldiers, dynasts, and lately mullahs—who harbored no illusions about the ground on which they stood, who were not "burdened" with enlightenment ideas, or consumed with petitioning the West, who did not have their heads crammed with foreign books and doctrines. The outcome has been the same in Sunni societies—Egypt, Syria, Pakistan—and in Iran, the sole Shia state in the realm of Islam.

In Egypt the national bourgeoisie, despite an early and promising start, remains a captive of the military class that dominates the state. An Islamic alternative from below—President Hosni Mubarak calls it the "frightening alternative"—presses against the power of the pharaonic state. But it does so with ferocity, and with such a degree of negation that it ends up playing into the hands of the custodians of the state. Erupting now and then in deeds of terror, Moslem fundamentalism cannot overwhelm the Egyptian state. Rather, it narrows the state's limited options, and speeds up the slide into mediocrity and paralysis. With every challenge mounted by the Moslem groups, the more imaginative souls among the national bourgeoisie, and the members of the Coptic minority, scurry for cover: they give the state their obedience in return for order and protection.

Works by Ali Shariati

Culture and Ideology (Free Islamic Literatures, 23 pp.)

On the Sociology of Islam (Mizan Press, 132 pp.)

Reflections of Humanity (Free Islamic Literatures, 37 pp.)

Fatima Is Fatima (The Shariati Foundation, 226 pp.)

Man and Islam (Free Islamic Literatures, 128 pp.)

Marxism and Other Western Fallacies (Mizan Press, 122 pp.)

Red Shiism (Free Islamic Literatures, 17 pp.)

From Where Shall We Begin and *The Machine in the Captivity of Machinism* (Free Islamic Literatures, 51 pp.)

Fouad Ajami is professor of Middle East Studies at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. He is the author most recently of *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Cornell University Press).

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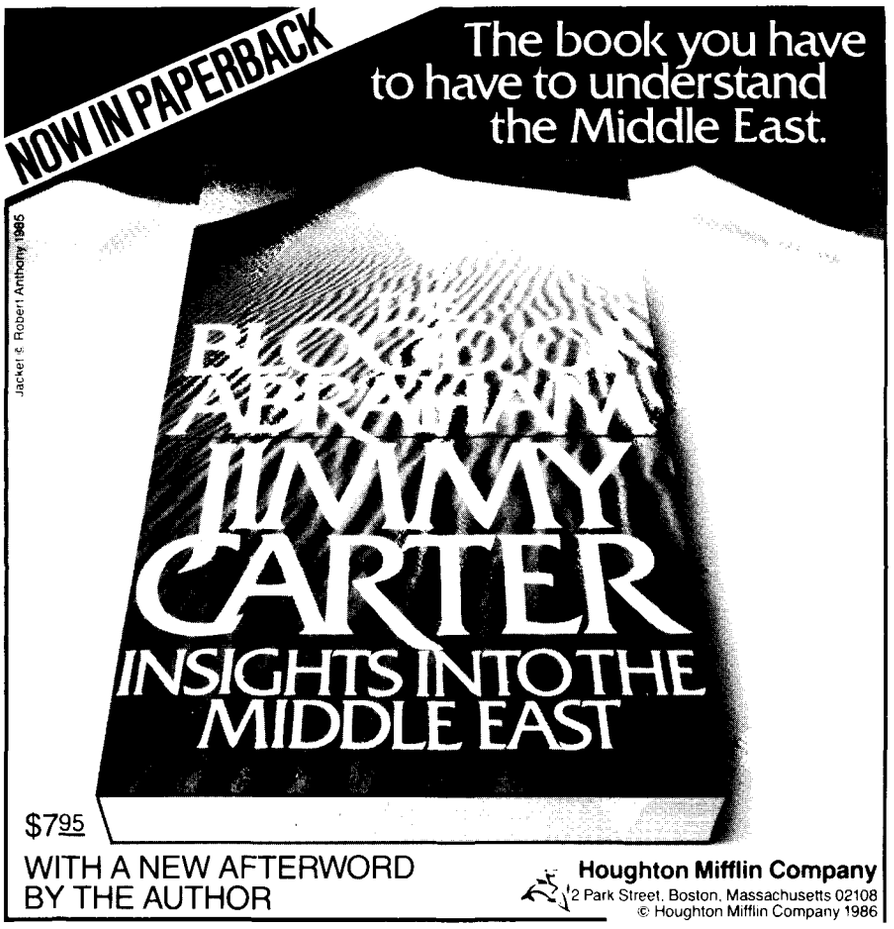
In Syria nothing grows in the middle between a ruthless minority regime of Alawite soldiers and a frightened society unable to come to terms with the regime or to overthrow it. In Pakistan the modernist consensus of Mohammed Ali Jinnah and his generation of Moslem *assimiles*, who created Pakistan to solve the existential problem of India's Moslem but wished to keep Islam tame and within bounds, has collapsed. Zia ul-Haq, a soldier who seems to equate Islam with a primitive code of punishments and floggings, embodies Pakistan's crisis, and its stalemate; he rules a resentful society. The high culture of South Asian Islam has issued forth in the rule of a soldier.

IN ONE Moslem society after another, to write of liberalism and of a national bourgeois tradition is to write obituaries of men who took on impossible odds, and then failed. The Moslem liberals may lack the fame of an Alexander Herzen or an Ivan Turgenev, but we recognize in them, too, those arresting Russian themes. There is the loneliness of the intellectuals, their devotion to ideas, their conviction that once problems are worked out on paper all will be well, their alternating moods of exaltation and gloom, their attraction to more "advanced" societies and their hurt and ambivalence as encounters between these "advanced" societies and their own more backward world force on them a choice between identifying with the foreigner and his judgments or defending things in their own world that they find repugnant and objectionable.

Echoes of the celebrated letter that Herzen wrote to the French scholar Jules Michelet in 1851 could be heard in the laments of so many Moslem (and other Third World) liberals: the anguished admission that Michelet was right in his judgment of Russia as a barbarous society, a society "devoid of all moral sense," and the stubborn, nearly desperate belief that the "emancipated" Russian will see his way through the terrible darkness. "We have so often cursed our unhappy country ourselves, you know that well, sir . . . ," Herzen wrote to Michelet. "In the tomb," he said, and wanted to believe, there was "a spark of life." But Herzen, so clear-eyed, knew better. The old world was dead; but there was nothing beyond its walls. All was "empty, vast, free. . . ." The choice was between an old world of "civilized senility" and a new world of "barbarous youth."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The life and works of the Iranian intellectual Ali Shariati (1933-1977) tell the story of Moslem liberalism in its essentials. That the writings of this French-educated intellectual, which were works of inspiration to many who brought down the old order, came to be cast aside by the more militant of the theocrats who prevailed so shortly after the revolution is an apt summation of this liberal dilemma. From what Shariati wrote, and from what is known of his temperament, it is hard to see the man who was imprisoned and muzzled by the old order finding a place for himself in the new world of the "saints" and inquisitors. The large mass that brought down the old order carried side by side portraits of Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. But the new world was to be Khomeini's.

Ali Shariati was born in Mazinan, a small village in Khorasan in northeast Iran. Shariati was educated in his village and in Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan and a seat of Islamic learning and pilgrimage. His first mentor was his father, Mohammed Taqi Shariati, a lay preacher, learned in Islam, a man with an activist bent. In Mashhad the older Shariati had founded a small religious center of sorts, "the Center for the Propagation of Islamic Truth." To his son, Mohammed Taqi Shariati bequeathed an independent mind, a touch of anticlericalism that was to become more pronounced in the life and work of the son, and a devotion to books. Of his father, the son writes:

> My father fashioned the first dimensions of my spirit. It was he who taught me the art of thinking and the art of being human. . . . It was he who introduced me to his friends—his books. They were my constant companions from the earliest years of my schooling. My father's library is now a world full of precious memories for me. I can remember each of his books, even their bindings. I love greatly that good sacred room, which is for me the summation of my sweet, good, but distant past.

Like his father, Shariati became an educator. After several years of teaching, the chance came his way in 1960 to go to France on a state scholarship. He stayed there for five years, during a time of great excitement in French intellectual and political life. In France he did what exiles and young Third World intellectuals did at the time: he read Sartre and Frantz Fanon, he read Marxist works, he was drawn into the agitation over the Algerian question. He came to know and study with the great Orientalist Louis Massignon. Then, after finishing his doctorate, he returned home. The shah's regime duly arrested him at the border and imprisoned him for several months.

In the decade or so that followed, Shariati emerged as the most compelling voice of Iranian Moslem modernism. It was as a lecturer in a Tehran religious meeting hall that Shariati made his mark, and his vast output has the style and strengths (and repetitiveness) of the oral tradition at which he excelled. His great success as a lecturer brought him to the attention of the autocracy, too: he was imprisoned in 1972 for about three years, and then kept under house arrest for another two years. He was granted permission to leave Iran in 1977. Shariati died in London in that year. His followers attributed his premature death to the involvement of Savak. He was buried on the outskirts of Damascus, on the grounds of a Shia shrine.

SHARIATI'S themes and concerns were simple and straightforward ones. He wrote as an Iranian witnessing the "cultural alienation" of his society in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He wrote as a Shiite who believed that Shiism was Islam's ideology of protest. And in his

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most "misty" and polemical writing, he wrote, as so many of his generation did, as a Third World intellectual concerned with the "hegemony of the West," and with finding an "authentic" response to both Western power and Marxism. He produced a mixed body of work. He was alternately brilliant and naive: scathing and surgical in his understanding of what history had done to the mainstream of Islam as a political and cultural system and apologetic in his insistence that Islam, renewed and reformed, offered the only way out for modern-day Moslems.

Shariati was attracted to Marxism's analysis of suffering and exploitation, but repelled by its "materialist interpretation of history." At his best, he could go back to the rise of Islam as a religio-political order and explain how religious orthodoxy became a prop of political power, and how the disinherited and the dispossessed formed an emotional world in Shia icons and symbolism, in the Shia themes of martyrdom and dispossession. At his weakest, he produced throwaway works about man being held captive by "machinism" and being turned into a "one-dimensional man." He was almost unreadable in some pamphlets that were a jumbled mixture of Sartre and Marcuse. But he soared when he produced a book titled *Fatima Is Fatima*, about the Prophet's sole surviving daughter and the sad fate she came to suffer in the aftermath of her father's death: she was denied the estate he bequeathed her, and was left with a bitter sense of political and earthly dispossession.

STILL, for all the unevenness, what comes through in Shariati's writings, what stirs the reader with sympathy for men caught in a difficult time and place and trying to see their way through the darkness, is the "soft" voice, the mixture of deep sorrow and stubborn hope—and at times, the powerful earthiness—with which he wrote. Here is Shariati at his best: in a passionate indictment of "assimilated pseudo-Europeans" in Iran, he tells of a man attending a lecture of his who stood up to ask him "whether in existentialism existence precedes essence or essence precedes existence." This man, Shariati says, was the father of malnourished children, and lived in a part of Mashhad that rain had effectively cut off from the rest of the city. "It is more important," Shariati told his questioner, "that the government take

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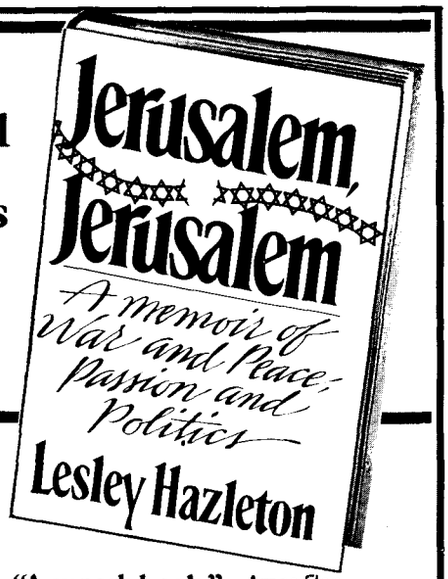

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care of the asphalt in your street. It precedes both the existence and the essence."

Men had to be aware of their own dilemmas. This, for Shariati, required a knowledge of Iran's culture—Shia Islam—which the "pseudo-Europeans" did not possess:

> A Persian-speaking person cannot easily understand what Ali [the first of the 12 Shia Imams], the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, has said, but all of the works of La Martine [sic], the French lover, can be read in Persian, what do you say?

Persians knew Brigitte Bardot and "the queen of Monaco and all of the seven female guards around James Bond," but their scholars and intellectuals are yet to take "pen in hand" and write of the great early personages of Shia Islam:

> For a nation whose religion is the religion of Ali it is extremely shameful not to have written a single worthwhile book concerning Ali and his companions. It is shameful that after fourteen centuries Ali should be made known to us by a Christian. . . . Salman Farisi was the first Iranian to embrace Islam. . . . He was a great man and a genius who followed the Prophet at the very beginning of his call, and then became so close to him as to be considered part of his family. The only book concerning this man—a source of pride to Iran from the national, scientific, religious and Shi'i viewpoints—has been written by a Frenchman; in Persian not even four pages exist concerning him.

In *Red Shiism*, one of his most interesting pamphlets—it is a work made more significant by the hurricane that carried Shiism along after his death—Shariati breaks with the cult of sorrow and lament that lay at the core of Shiism. "Black Shiism" (his description of mainstream Shia history) had mourned for itself, for the fallen Imams, the claimants to the Prophet's legacy, who lost out in the struggle for the Prophet's political kingdom. On the whole, Shia history had been a history of dispossession. Its trail of defeat had become a warrant for political withdrawal and quietism. This was not what Shiism was about, Shariati exhorted. Shiism had begun with an act of refusal. The Prophet's daughter Fatima, his son-in-law Ali, and their progeny had upheld the pristine message of Islam against "aristocracy and compromise." "The history of Islam," he wrote, "followed a strange path," a path in which power was usurped by "hoodlums and ruffians from the Arab, Persian, Turk, and Tartar dynasty." Shiism was a rebellion against this history. It turned its back on power, refused to submit to the dominant political order, and drew on "the tribulations and hopes of the oppressed."

Mainstream Islam, Shariati wrote, compromised with the autocratic regimes, came to terms with the sword and the treasure of the ruler. But Shiism remained "the fountainhead of rebellion." It flourished as a "revolutionary school of thought, against the harsh prejudices and the soulless, petrifying censorship of the theological and legal system attached to the ruling group." In the face of a merciless political order, Shia millenarianism conjured up the promise of a millennium: the "end of time" and the *Mahdi*, the avenger, who returns to fill the earth with justice, to punish the wicked, to raise the humble who kept up the faith. Here Shariati puts forward a modern intellectual's interpretation of the occultation of the twelfth Imam, who disappeared to the eyes of "ordinary men" in the ninth century to return at some future date. Belief in the occultation of the Imam, he says, "promotes the idea of revenge and revolt, faith in the ultimate downfall of tyrants. . . . It prepares all of the oppressed and justice-seeking masses who await participation in the revolt." In Shariati's formulation, the religious idea is made to serve an avowedly secular and political agenda. The religious idea of redemption is turned into a political weapon.

IF THESE were Shiism's beginnings, where then did Shia history go wrong? Shariati offers a thoroughly radical and political answer: the Safavid dynasty. This dynasty, which brought Shiism to Iran as a state religion in the 16th century, disfigured early Shiism and turned it into a weapon of exploitation and obscurantism. With the Safavids the revolutionary wave of Shiism ended; Shiism "departed from the great mosque of the masses." Red Shiism is turned into Black Shiism: "The religion of martyrdom changes to the religion of mourning." It was the task of a committed intellectual to find the way back to Shiism's innocence and rebellion.

Shariati was under no illusion that changing his generation would be an easy task. He described his time in Iran as an "enervated period," and his peers as a "faithless generation." In one of those earthy, common touches of his, he took as a symbol of his time the fact that the consumption of cosmetics had increased in Iran by 500 percent between 1956 and 1966. He knew that masses of men and women left to themselves were at the mercy of the powers that be:

> When masses have no faith and are not devout, when they do not feel responsibility towards an ideal, and the scientific awareness of their free-thinkers is not put at their disposal for intellectual guidance and social responsibility, no danger will threaten the bullies of the world.

Shariati lived in a merciless world; soldiers and "ruffians" ruled it. There were no tears shed for the losers. And thus, in his own search for Islam, there is a search for the countertradition, for things tender in that history. Shariati's heroes were invariably men (two-dimensional men, he called them) who were not only men of war and administration, but also men of gentle temperament—"monks and the sophists who led virtuous lives," who resisted the extremes of "asceticism" and worldliness. Men and women terrified and enthralled by power and worldly success had to be shown a better way. His book-length discourse on Fatima invited Iranians in 1971 to ponder the life and example of the Prophet's daughter:

> Beyond the green palace of Damascus and the hanging noose of the fairy-tale Caliph of 1001 Nights of Baghdad, Iranians find the abandoned mud-built house of Ali and Fatima and discern that Islam is in this sorrowful, abandoned, silent abode.

The year 1971 also witnessed the shah's extravagant display of pomp and pathetic pretension at Persepolis, to celebrate "two thousand and five hundred years of Persian kingship." Shariati's excursions into history were always works of allegory, works focused on his society and its difficult circumstances.

IN ONE OF his softer and more gentle pieces, he wrote a "letter to a friend" about his "predecessors" who built the pyramids in Egypt, about other "predecessors" crushed by power and civilization. He had asked his guide, he wrote, to show him the graves of the slaves who were crushed into dust. There was nothing to see, the guide had explained:

> I requested that the guide leave me alone. I then went to those graves and sat down, feeling very close to the people buried in those ditches. It was as if we were of the same race. It is true that each of us came from different geographical areas but these differences are inconsequential when viewed as a basis for dividing mankind. For out of this phenomenon arose the concepts of strangers and relatives. I was not in-

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volved in this system of classification and racial division; therefore, I had nothing but warm feelings and sympathy toward these oppressed souls. I looked back to the Pyramids and realized that despite their magnificence, they were so strange to and distant from me! In other words, I felt so much hatred towards the great monuments of civilization which throughout history were raised upon the bones of my predecessors! My predecessors also built the great walls of China. Those who could not carry the loads were crushed under the heavy stones and put into the walls with the stones. This was how all the great monuments of civilization were constructed—at the expense of the flesh and blood of my predecessors!

The rest of the story is familiar. What Shariati represented was overwhelmed by a mighty storm. Men in Iran broke old chains and forged new ones. The great conjurer who triumphed, Ayatollah Khomeini, read his world with greater precision and depth than his liberal rivals. Iran had been hurt and defiled and confused. The "saint" who returned home to save the place asked only for obedience, for religious rigor. In return, he offered a millennium, with all its worldly and religious gifts: revenge against the mighty, the illusion of harmony and purity, the illusion of return to something unbending and familiar. Before that tidal wave of passion, the fragile world held up by a liberal tradition crumbled. There were really two ideas of authority in Iran: that of kingship and that of the Hidden Imam. The first had failed. The second rose to fill the void, to build out of the wreckage of the "Great Civilization" left behind by the monarchy a stern regime of virtue and terror.

ALL ALONG, men like Shariati—men such as Iran's postrevolutionary president Hassan Bani-Sadr—had been playing with fire. They had assumed that Islam could be unleashed to bring down the old order and that its passion could be harnessed to build something decent and pretty. They had assigned to that Islamic force an "anti-imperialist" function. In their fantasy, Islam would bring down a political world tied to the power of the foreigners, and then it would blow over. The fury of the masses—all those wrongs waiting to be righted, the pent-up resentments and the mental darkness—would have its moment, and then, by some magic, it would be capped.

A whole literature of Moslem apologetics had stressed the compatibility between Islam and democracy, Islam and tolerance, and so on. All of that literature was part of a long intellectual

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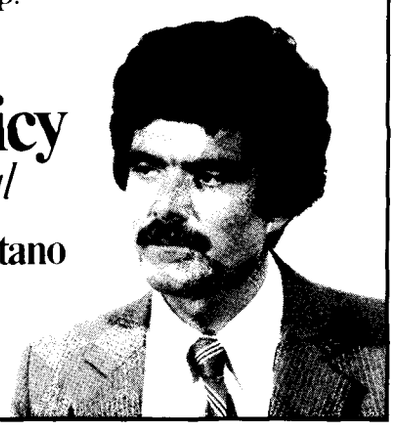

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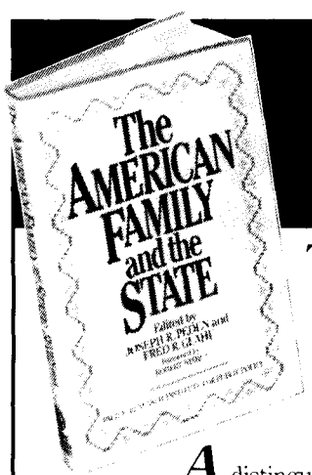

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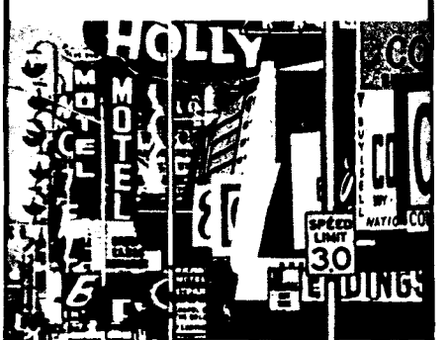

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dialogue that these modernists had carried on with Western intellectuals and critics. They were busy debating with the foreigner; they looked past the popular sensibilities of the masses, past the intolerance of religion and the obscurantism of the religious institutions. And thus they were not ready when Islam refused to take a bow, to deliver its exit lines.

It was not only the presence of the West, and the world of those who rode the coattails of the West, that was swept away. The storm carried away all that—and more. Its indiscriminate power also carried away those pockets of restraint and civility that a corrupt ancien régime had tolerated. Shariati had wanted the masses of Iran to "know" their revered Imams, to turn Black Shiism into Red Shiism. But it was soon after his death that the romance with "martyrdom" turned into a monster. The modernists who had put off an honest encounter with the darkness of religion had sown the wind.

THE HUSTLER

Jesse Jackson and the Politics of Race
by Thomas Landess and Richard Quinn

(Jameson Books, 269 pp., $17.95)

The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon
by Adolph L. Reed Jr.

(Yale University Press, 170 pp., $17.50, $5.95 paper)

Region-wide primary elections in the South now seem inevitable for 1988. So, therefore, does the increased prominence of Jesse Jackson in the race for the Democratic nomination. Coming early in the campaign and concentrated in the area of Jackson's greatest strength, the Southern primaries are likely to thrust him into an even more conspicuous role than he had in the Democratic Convention of 1984. His next performance should contain fewer surprises for Democrats than his last—if his party takes the pains to study the record he left.

The two books at hand contribute substantially in quite different ways to banishing myth and revealing the truth about that record. Thomas Landess's and Richard Quinn's journalistic narrative begins with Jackson unceremoniously snatching the mantle of Martin Luther King Jr. after the assassination, and continues in roughly chronological order through the election of 1981. The authors are rather casual about generalizations, sometimes careless about facts, and somewhat impressionistic with data, but they are generally right-minded in interpretation and forthright in name-calling. *The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon* by Adolph L. Reed Jr., on the other hand, is a scholar's monograph written in political-science prose. The vocabulary of this science is polysyllabic, the syntax often baffling, but persistent efforts in translation are rewarded by some illuminating analysis and original findings. In neither work does Jesse come off unscathed. In each his reputation suffers devastating disclosures.

Landess and Quinn begin by stripping Jackson of King's mantle and exposing as fraudulent the shirt he displayed and claimed was stained with the martyr's blood. It turns out that he was not even present at the assassination, and King is reported to have despised his pretensions and earlier efforts at self-promotion. Jackson is pictured from the start as "a romancer, a spinner of tall tales, a slightly dishonest poseur, at times even worse," and as "the brash upstart forever giving orders ... attempting to usurp positions of leadership that others had earned in combat."

An example of Jackson's performance as overreaching upstart is his Breadbasket Operation in Chicago. He was not one of the originators but a latecomer, and his bullheaded tactics imperiled King's crusade. But the educational crusade that followed, known as "PUSH Excel," was Jackson's own. It is described as "his most lucrative enter-

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prise." In fact it was an enormously successful shakedown of private foundations, municipal funds, federal bureaus, and the Arab League. It flourished sensationally until it faltered in 1984, under harsh attacks by black educators and criticism for failure to make acceptable financial reports under state and federal law.

As portrayed by Landess and Quinn, Jackson has during the last decade played two quite contradictory roles simultaneously. One is the role of the martyred King, Christian apostle of nonviolence who sought integration and common ground with whites. In the other role he is "something of a Black Muslim, son of Elijah Muhammad, and a blood brother of Louis Farrakhan." In his long-term partnership with Farrakhan, Jackson is a militant black nationalist who is willing to coexist with whites only on certain terms. Black nationhood is the paramount aim. One step in that direction is the establishment of a separate black foreign policy. Jackson has promoted this idea by exchanging kisses with Arafat of the PLO, by meeting with Assad of Syria, by seeking closer ties with the Arab nations of the Middle East and Africa, by exchanging flatteries with Castro in Havana, and by "forever leaping in front of television cameras."

In all this, the press and other media have treated Jackson with remarkable restraint and generosity, as compared with their treatment of other politicians. A striking display of preferential treatment of Jackson followed the revelation of his scurrilous anti-Semitic remarks and of his continued personal and political ties with Louis Farrakhan—after the latter's death threat against the journalist who reported Jackson's words and Farrakhan's even more filthy outburst of racism against Jews.

A MORE astute treatment of Jackson's campaign and its racial politics is Reed's *The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon*. He begins with an analysis of claims made by the Jackson forces that have gained wide credence over the years. Reed reduces these to "six core assertions":

> (1) that Jackson has a base among the "black masses," who supported his efforts over elite opposition; (2) that he is a central figure in black politics in the South . . . ; (3) that a Jackson campaign was crucial for stimulating black voter registration and turnout, especially in the South; (4) that Jackson's candidacy would generate significant coattail effects, assisting the election of black candidates . . . ; (5) that Jackson's efforts would reinvigorate politics among Afro-Americans and stimulate political discourse in the black community; and (6) that the campaign opened the possibility for a new, progressive alliance in the Democratic party, the "Rainbow Coalition."

None of these six Jacksonian claims stands up under close examination.

In the 1984 primaries Jackson usually ran better among the higher black income-earning groups than among lower income groups. A larger percentage of Jackson's delegates to the nominating convention than of Gary Hart's delegates reported annual incomes of $35,000 or more, and also a higher percentage reported postgraduate education than did either the delegates of Hart or Fritz Mondale. Among all the registered black voters surveyed shortly before the convention, Mondale commanded considerably larger support than Jackson.

Jackson's claims of special power in the South, of coattail benefits to black candidates, and of important impact on black voter registration and turnout are all interrelated. As for voter registration among blacks, it had been growing throughout the decade and a half preceding the election of 1984, and the growth was due mainly to local efforts and concerns that had nothing to do with Jesse Jackson. While lending a hand, Jesse really came along for a piggyback ride. Meanwhile, the coattail rides that black congressional, mayoral, and local candidates were predicted to derive from Jackson's campaign for the presidential nomination actually produced little mileage. A study of the effects of Jackson's furious and racially polarized tactics on turnout and mobilization of black voters in the South leads to the conclusion that, so far as black interests are concerned, the movement was a "washout."

In assessing the mystique of the South with which Jackson surrounded his campaign from the start, Reed reminds us that Jesse had not lived in the South for more than ten years, that his turf was Chicago. The image of an underdeveloped black political life in the South, on which Jackson's mystique was based, is anachronistic. The South accounted for a higher percentage of black elected officials than the North, higher than the percentage of blacks in its population as a whole. By 1983 the three largest cities of

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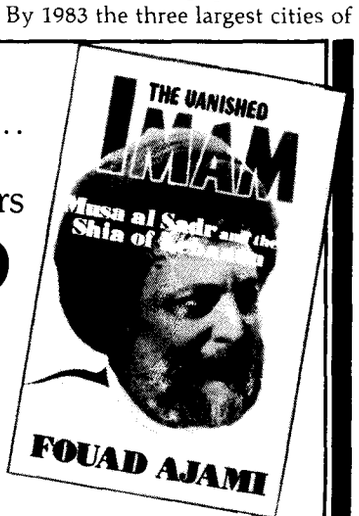

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the Deep South had black mayors. The rate of increase in black officeholders from 1970 to 1982 was at least twice as high in the South as in any other region. By that time black politics in the South stood in no need of a generator, and Jesse Jackson was not a catalyst.

Another Jackson legend that comes in for rough treatment by Reed is the "Rainbow Coalition" and its pretensions of multiracial, cross-class appeal; Reed doubts that the coalition ever existed at all. Yet another is the myth of the black church as the key to popularly based black political activity and autonomy. As for Jackson's ideology and program, Reed accepts James Reston's remark that they were so shallow they could fit on a bumper sticker. The combination of antilabor and anti-Semitic rhetoric suggests to Reed "the potential for unscrupulousness that bedevils black elites" in many of their political perceptions.

The left has shown little more shrewdness in its perception of the Jacksonian phenomenon than have the media. And the latter have outdone themselves in generosity with space and favorable attention for Jackson. Some campus radicals and leftist periodicals embraced him with naive enthusiasm and apparent blindness to his faults. In an attempt to account for the naïveté of those leftists who fell for Jackson, Reed mentions the long winter of reactionism, and the prospect of another term for Reagan that inspired desperation and a tendency to clutch at straws; and he notes, too, the superficiality and opportunism that have characterized white attitudes toward black politics.

Jesse Jackson is back with us again, and it would seem we will be hearing a lot more from him during the next two years. In April he opened in Washington the "founding" convention of his National Rainbow Coalition, at which he collected sundry dissidents and declared them "a third force of enlightened democrats" and himself the voice of "those who are being locked out of their party." As if the Democrats did not have enough troubles already. If they cannot handle the Jackson troubles better than they did last time, given what they now know of the perpetrator, the fault will be largely their own.

C. VANN WOODWARD

C. Vann Woodward's most recent book is *Thinking Back: The Perils of Writing History* (Louisiana State University Press).

SEX AND THE SINGLE THINKER

Sexual Desire: A Moral Philosophy of the Erotic by Roger Scruton

(The Free Press, 428 pp., $25)

Roger Scruton is an interesting man. A widely read, many-sided, imaginative philosopher, he combines teaching at the University of London not only with a lot of inconspicuous work on behalf of good causes, but with a very visible public career as a conservative polemicist. His columns in the London *Times* defending Thatcherism have enabled him to combine, in England, the roles played in America by Robert Nozick and George Will.

Sexual desire has become, particularly in recent decades, an interesting subject. Fifty years ago it was not very interesting. Discussion of the topic in those days tended to oscillate between two rather simpleminded positions. On the one hand, there was Platonism—an etherealized version of Plato's astonished reaction to Socrates's saying, when cuddled by Alcibiades, "Dear boy, I'm only interested in your *soul*." Platonists asked themselves questions like, "Am I in love or merely inflamed by passion?" On the other side there was Laurentianism—a vulgarized version of D. H. Lawrence's admiration for rutting rams, stallions, and so on. Laurentians asked themselves questions like, "Have I overcome *all* my repressions?" Or if they had read a bit more Freud, they asked, "Have I achieved mature, genital sexuality?" Freud himself was treated as just a pedantic, Teutonic sort of Laurentian. He was, supposedly, the man who told us that our genitals rather than our brains were the center of our being.

Since then, however, there have been developments. For one thing, Freud has been reread, and read in more varied and useful ways. We can now read him as a moralist with Lionel Trilling and Philip Rieff, or as "the mythopoeic imagination of our age" with Harold Bloom, or, with Jean Laplanche, as a philosopher who makes sexuality the mark of the difference between the human and the animal. (Animals have only a monotonic reproductive "instinct," whereas we rejoice in a sexual "drive" capable of perversion, sublimation, and manipulation.) Further, we now have Foucault's history of sexuality at hand, as well as his treatment of Freudianism as a sort of reduction to absurdity of the increased uptightness about sex that began in late antiquity. Finally, there is feminism. We now suspect Plato, Lawrence, and even Freud, of discussing questions about sexual desire that arise for only half of humanity. The other half, even though not especially interested either in Socrates or in stallions, may have different, and perhaps more fruitful, questions.

So we have an interesting author writing on a recently refurbished topic. *Sexual Desire* ought to have been an interesting book. But it is not nearly as interesting as it might have been. The main problem is that Scruton refuses to take the competition seriously. Freud is lined up alongside Kinsey and sociobiology in a chapter called "The Science of Sex," and then dismissed in 17 amazingly condescending pages. Foucault gets two pages, on both of which we are told that he was quite, quite wrong in thinking that sexuality has a history. The only feminists Scruton mentions are the late Simone de Beauvoir and Germaine Greer, and those two only in passing. Scruton brushes aside practically everything said by the interesting people who have recently been reflecting on sex.

Scruton thinks he can do this because he believes that, as a philosopher, he holds the methodological high ground. In his view, most of us moderns have been misled about sexual desire either by "science" on the one hand or by Rousseau and romanticism on the other. It is the arduous but pleasant duty of the philosopher to set things straight. Philosophy, for Scruton, takes the form of "conceptual analysis" (which he also calls, in an eclectic, let's-not-be-beastly-to-the-Germans mood, "the phenomenology of the Lebenswelt"). By applying the powerful analytic methods that philosophers have recently perfected, he believes, we can discover the essential, ahistorical, a priori nature of sexual desire. We can then proceed to clear up the conceptual confusions characteristic of the psychoanalysts, the Foucauldians, the feminists, the romantics, and much of the general public. Scruton says that

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he will "attempt to restore the concept of sexual desire to its rightful place in the description of the Lebenswelt, and to show in detail why a science of sex can neither displace that concept nor illuminate the human phenomenon that it describes." ("Lebenswelt" was the term used by Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, for the warm cozy world in which we all lived before modern science offered its bare, chilly alternative.)

In case there are any customers out there who still believe that we philosophy professors can deliver the sort of goods Scruton promises, let me caution them that a lot of us doubt that we can do anything of the sort. Training in philosophy is very useful in all sorts of ways when discussing all sorts of subjects, even sex. But beware of the philosopher who starts off by telling you that his own vocabulary, the grid upon which he will proceed to dissect his competitors, embodies an "a priori truth about the human person." Remember that, in the case at hand, people of the caliber of Freud and Foucault are supposed to have overlooked this necessary and ubiquitous truth. These poor guys didn't even know their way around their own Lebenswelt. They didn't even notice where sexual desire is located. Does Scruton seriously believe that his training as a philosopher puts him in a better position to discern the "rightful place" of sexual desire than the positions occupied by Freud or Foucault?

SCRUTON THINKS that from Plato to Kinsey people have been misled by the idea that sexual desire is something "merely animal." So he starts off his book with five chapters devoted to demonstrating and enlarging on his principal thesis—that sexual desire is intentional. In the language of philosophers, intentional relations (like believing in God or in Celia's fidelity, or desiring God's approval or Jimmy's love) are contrasted with causal relations (like the closure of some valves erecting a penis). To say that sexual desire, in the sense in which men and women have it and rams and ewes do not, is intentional is just to say that we humans can feel sexually desirous of *particular* people—even people who are far away, or exist only in novels, or are otherwise out of causal range. For a rutting ram, by contrast, any ewe will do: the smell of any ewe will close the valves. Conversely, an ewe who is out of sight and smell is out of range of the ram's lust. Sheep sex (as far as we know) can be adequately described in causal terms, but human sex is different: one cannot disentangle the desire for Celia or Jimmy from beliefs about Celia or Jimmy.

One can grant this point (which does not really require all the detailed—and eminently skippable—technical buildup it gets) while being puzzled at what Scruton hopes to milk from it. What he says he gets out of it is a "philosophical foundation" for a defense of (in his words) "decency" and "bourgeois marriage." But the connection is hard to see. There is much to be said for both decency and bourgeois marriage, and much to be said against the "any sexual outlet is as good as another" view that Scruton attributes, implausibly, to Freud as well as to Kinsey. In the closing chapters of his book, Scruton says a lot along these lines, and some of it is forceful and to the point. If somebody had edited *Sexual Desire* down to about a hundred pages, keeping only the best sentences and skimping on the "philosophical foundations," we would have had a good, well-written polemic against the idea that your sex life has nothing whatever to do with your moral character.

BUT SCRUTON is wrong in thinking that this polemic is strengthened by the dubious claim that ever since Plato an important intellectual tradition has wrongly been "assigning sexual desire to the animal side of human nature." Certainly lots of people have said that sex was something to be avoided if possible, a distraction from our proper concerns, beneath the notice of our higher selves. Some of these people have referred to sex (as Plato occasionally did) as "merely animal." But it is hard to see that any of them, even Plato, would have denied the distinction Scruton draws between ovine and human sexuality. Indeed, it is hard to see how denying it could be more than a verbal maneuver, more than saying "well, insofar as your sexual desire is intentional, it is not really a pure case of sexual desire, but rather sexual desire mixed up with a 'higher,' specifically human component from which it needs to be analyzed out."

Anybody who said that would, like Scruton, be practicing "conceptual analysis." This sort of analysis consists in redefining a term in such a way that people on the other side of the argument are made to seem guilty of "conceptual confusion." Instead of debating moral issues by comparing and contrasting the sorts of human lives that result from adopting one or another attitude (toward sex, for example), philosophers are tempted to try for a knockdown argument by putting forward an "a priori truth about the human person." This is just the sort of thing that gives philosophy a bad name.

IF WE IGNORE this effort at argumentative overkill and skip to the later chapters in which Scruton tells us what he thinks about various sexual attitudes and practices, we find a lot to admire and a lot to distrust. Scruton is sometimes brilliant, as when he discusses clothing: "Fashion pierces the opacity of the body, and overcomes its *eeriness*." Sometimes he is reduced to rant, as when, desperately trying to make masturbation relevant to morality, he says, "The harmless wanker with the video-machine can at any moment turn into the desperate rapist with a gun." Sometimes he is just weird, as in his description of "female homosexuality . . . in so far as it has been sensitively recorded":

> the lesbian knows that she desires someone who will not typically make those advances that are characteristic of a man, even if she wants to; nor can she make these advances herself without compromising the gender-identity which (she wishes to believe) is integral to her own attractiveness.

(This will surprise readers of Rita Mae Brown, but perhaps Scruton finds Brown insensitive.)

Sometimes Scruton is indeed interesting, but exasperating, as when he says that if "Kantian feminism" (the view that morally we are all just persons, that our sexual characteristics are irrelevant to our sense of selfhood) were correct, "it would be impossible to think of myself as a man rather than as a person with a man's body." One sees his point, but surely the feminists' point is not that thinking of oneself as ("essentially") a man is impossible but that it is deplorable—an attitude that history has made easy but which we should try to make less easy in the future. Scruton should not attribute his own ahistorical apriorism to feminists, most of whom regard that philosophical strategy as just one more patriarchal power play.

The later chapters of the book partly make up for the almost unreadable, and specifically philosophical, earlier chapters. But Scruton has written better books, and doubtless will again. These days, happily, neither "Let's get those concepts analyzed *right*!" nor "Let's see

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how the Lebenswelt *really* appears!" is a slogan much in vogue among philosophers. Scruton's use of both is a bit quaint. It is a pity that he was unwilling, this time around, to abandon the ritual incantations characteristic, alas, of his and my profession. One hopes that next time he will come down from the mountain and talk to his opponents, rather than trying to annihilate them with bolts of high-powered conceptual analysis. For if we get many more books by philosophers that take Scruton's high a priori line, people will begin to take for granted that nowadays the best works of moral philosophy (Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain*, Roberto Unger's *Passion*, Michael Walzer's *Spheres of Justice*, Judith Shklar's *Ordinary Vices*) are being written by nonphilosophers.

RICHARD RORTY

Richard Rorty, the author most recently of *Consequences of Pragmatism* (University of Minnesota Press), is Kenan Professor of Humanities at the University of Virginia.

AMERICA'S INVISIBLE ARMY

Out of Work: The First Century of Unemployment in Massachusetts by Alexander Keyssar

(Cambridge University Press, 469 pp., $49.50, $14.95 paper)

Among the many sad signs of the times, few are more depressing than the public discussion of jobs and unemployment. A decade ago the notion of guaranteed full employment could still win a respectful hearing on Capitol Hill, on Op-Ed pages, and in a few corporate boardrooms. Liberals simply assumed there was something absurd about a wealthy democratic nation that obligated able-bodied adults to support themselves, but which granted no one the right to a job. Now, though, liberals have lost their nerve and forgotten their lines. Old proposals like the Humphrey-Hawkins bill—a rather mild attack on unemployment—sound today like crackpot Fourierist fantasies. Instead we hear from the administration about the subminimum wage and other schemes to cure hard-core unemployment by stimulating sweatshop entrepreneurship. Worse still, some liberals take this nonsense seriously.

Part of the problem, as Alexander Keyssar's excellent new book reminds us, is that the subject has always invited moralism. Today's braver liberals plead for fairness and compassion toward the unemployed, with only vague hints about how to translate these virtues into concrete reforms. Conservatives reply with the old-time religion of discipline, hard work, and the abstract justice of the free market. Completely lost in the moral dramaturgy is any sense of those structural flaws that have made periods of alarming unemployment a persistent feature of American life. Keyssar tries to improve the situation by investigating how and when unemployment emerged as an American social problem.

Writing such a history turns out to be an awesome task. Only a few historians have paid much attention to unemployment before the Great Depression. (One exception, John A. Garraty, has offered an interesting survey of ideas about unemployment in his *Unemployment in History*, which appeared in 1978.) Apart from reading some passing remarks about periodic economic panics, one could easily get the impression that, before 1929, few if any Americans who wanted work failed to find it. Historians of the New Deal and after aren't much more help. After some moving descriptions of apple sellers and bread lines, they usually shift the scene to Washington, to the origins and rise of the welfare state. Limiting himself to the important case of pre-Depression Massachusetts, Keyssar has had to pull together reams of scattered data in order to answer the most rudimentary questions. He does this with exactness and a certain statistical flair. But he also does a great deal more.

Keyssar traces the origins of unemployment back to the origins of American industrial capitalism itself, to the

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1830s, when the rise of the first New England factories left a significant portion of the work force vulnerable to layoffs and sudden economic crises. For a generation thereafter, several factors mitigated the effects of joblessness in what was still a rural society—above all, the ease with which Yankee workers could temporarily turn to farming. Only in the 1870s, after the Irish mass immigration and the rapid rise of a dependent industrial working class, did anyone begin to single out unemployment as a specific social ill. Over the next half century—in what Keyssar calls "the era of uncertainty"—unemployment became a central fact of life for Massachusetts workers.

Ascertaining just how central a fact it was leads Keyssar to some of his most startling discoveries. Then, as now, Americans could measure the extent of unemployment by looking at the annual unemployment rate, the average proportion of the labor force idled at any one time. Then, as now, the numbers inspired measured confidence, at least in Massachusetts, where the rate ranged between five and ten percent in the closing decades of the 19th century. Worrisome, perhaps, but not cataclysmic. But Keyssar, working mainly from census data, derives more meaningful statistics on the frequency of unemployment—the percentage of workers idled at some point during a year—and describes a darker reality.

During the hardest times, upward of 40 percent of all Massachusetts workers—and over 60 percent of all workers in some blue-collar industries—were out of a job for part of the year, usually for four months or more. Even when the economy was healthy, about one in four workers—and much higher proportions of industrial workers—could expect to be unemployed for three months a year. Though certain workers (immigrants, the unskilled) shouldered the burden a bit more than others, the disparities across the lines of skill, ethnicity, and gender were remarkably small. Industrial workers of every kind lived in a world where, as Keyssar writes, "to be unemployed was 'normal,' " and where fear of unemployment was permanent. For the most fortunate, the loss of work was a trivial, almost welcome event. More often, it shattered already spare household budgets. And for tens of thousands of workers, it meant chronic destitution.

A portion of the suffering could be blamed on unexpected or accidental misfortune, everything from fire to isolated bankruptcies. More commonly, Keyssar finds, unemployment resulted from business practices designed to keep labor markets flexible and allow employers to best the competition. In short, Keyssar has uncovered, at every level of the working class, a systemic enforced idleness produced by the normal functioning of the economy—a reserve army of the unemployed.

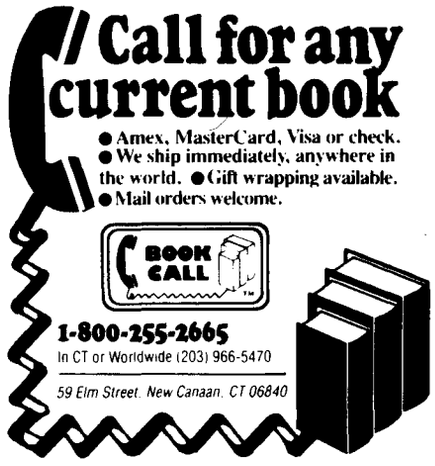
NO DOUBT many readers will fidget at Keyssar's use of such a well-worn Marxist phrase. No doubt some will bridle. But then there is all of Keyssar's evidence to contend with. And it is hard to think of too many conventional generalizations about the heroic age of American industrialism that this evidence does not challenge or modify. Keyssar himself does some of the challenging. He notes, for example, that the time-honored idea about rapid rates of geographic mobility blurring class differences in 19th-century America begins to look dubious once we realize that many, if not most, of those mobile Americans were unemployed workers and their families searching for jobs.

To his credit, however, Keyssar backs away from scoring academic points. Instead he turns to the larger problem of how workers coped. With an imaginative use of fragmentary evidence, he describes the virtually total ineffectiveness of existing institutional relief and charity, and sketches out some of the private ways in which kin, neighbors, and friends helped keep each other afloat. Although insightful and filled with some interesting information (particularly about tramps), there is a hurried quality to these observations, especially coming after so much copious statistical detail. Keyssar shows how unemployment kept succeeding generations trapped in the working class, but he leaves us wanting to know far more about how it affected the texture of ethnic working-class communities and family life.

HE IS BETTER on the politics of unemployment, to which he devotes three solid chapters. It is not a happy tale. The craft unions, frightened by the potential divisiveness of the reserve army and unwilling to enhance the power of the state, wound up scrapping the idea that shorter hours could help cure joblessness, and hunkered down to protecting their members. Sporadic popular movements of the unemployed, outside the unions, whipped up some enthusiasm and focused attention on government responsibility for the unemployed, but they failed to sustain themselves, or to move beyond militant theatrics. Only gradually did businessmen, politicians, and reformers, prodded by the slumps of the early 20th century, begin to come up with anything bolder than some unfortunate plans for voluntary efforts to reduce unemployment. Keyssar does report a "sea change" in middle-class opinion between 1908 and the early 1920s, when various groups (for very different reasons) began urging state action to cure, or at least curb, the problem. But as soon as bad slumps were over, reform passions faded and budget-balancing conservatives took charge, leaving behind meager changes at best.

Fifty years after the first inquiries into the causes of involuntary idleness, there was no unemployment policy in Massachusetts. It took the Great Depression, the sight of thousands of workers simultaneously out of work for a year and more, to transform a growing middle-class consensus into successful government assumption of direct responsibility for the jobless. And even then the New Deal's restructuring of the nation's political economy, momentous as it was, only contained the problem, replacing inaction with managed unemployment. Indeed, since 1932 there has been no long-term national decline in the unemployment rate. Recent figures on the frequency of unemployment nationwide are comparable to those Keyssar finds in pre-Depression Massachusetts.

Keyssar's rendering of politics will not please everyone. His detailed discussion of the middle-class "sea change" does more to describe the process than to explain it; occasionally Keyssar is thrown back on wispy clichés, such as attributing growing public concern in part to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"the broad-gauged impulse for social reform traditionally associated with the Progressive era." His descriptions of the unemployed movements, though colorful, might have been better connected to the larger history of lower-class protest, in Massachusetts and the rest of the country. And Keyssar's sobriety, his stress on the limits of political action, keeps him from conveying in full the extraordinary political climate of the years before World War I, when radicals, reformers—and it seems, unemployed workers—suddenly seized upon the headiest of democratic possibilities. Instead, out of this history of venality, injustice, and missed opportunities comes a melancholy portrait of industrializing America, of widespread unemployment as an intrinsic part of rapid economic growth, of unemployed Americans powerless to do much about it beyond helping each other out, of a government incapable of doing much more.

Still, somber as it is, *Out of Work* should be inspected closely by many readers besides professors and graduate students. Keyssar has written a highly original and valuable contribution to the study of working-class history, a major work that should influence all future research in the field. But beyond that, the book reminds us of the long prehistory of what the New Deal was up against, and why the New Dealers were called upon to begin a major (though ultimately incomplete) overhaul. Keyssar helps us conjure up what a revived and untrammeled "opportunity society"—with our current huge reserve army of the unemployed—might look like. He instructs us to doubt whether the current economic boom is anything of the kind, or really more of a reorganization of labor markets on terms more favorable to capital. He leaves us wary of any panacea for unemployment that does not address the key political problem—that unemployment and suffering have long been structural necessities for American expansion and innovation. And he even tells us something about those forgotten and defeated strategies—especially the shortening of hours to expand employment—well worth thinking about now that we have entered a baffling new era of uncertainty. It's not often that a historical monograph has this much contemporary relevance. But then these are times when a lot of people need some reminders.

SEAN WILENTZ

Sean Wilentz teaches history at Princeton and is the author of *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (Oxford University Press).

THE HOME AND THE WORLD

Local Time
by Stephen Dunn

(Quill/William Morrow, 111 pp., $14.95, $6.95 paper)

Unlike Stephen Dunn's past work, and unlike most collections of poetry, *Local Time* depends for its cohesion on an overarching narrative—a masterfully crafted whole that often outshines the individual poems that compose it. Dunn's title clues us in to his organizing strategy. He pits the local, finite reality of home and hearth against a boundless universe; free will against the existence of a divine plan. Tired themes, to be sure—but Dunn gives them new resonance.

Throughout the collection, his persona attempts—to no avail—to establish his own time, divorced from the "orbital tick / of the planet." Dunn's skillful arrangement of verse provides the perfect setting for such a quest, itself enforcing an "orbital tick"—a narrative closure that's heralded from the start, by a poem titled "Round Trip." His nostalgic protagonist, unable to keep or kill time, learns to mark it and measure it.

Although his free verse, wedded as it is to the commonplace, may sometimes seem prosaic, Dunn imbues the mundane with the mystical, by depicting a self-absorbed domestic world continuously invaded (for better or worse) by forces whose purpose it cannot fathom:

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"The house had double locks / but in the dark a wrong person / would understand: the windows / were made of glass:" It is here—with a colon between order and anarchy, between the well-lit front porch and what's "out there" in the dark—that Dunn's speaker and Dunn's poetry dwell.

Looking for Holes in the Ceiling, his first collection, published 12 years ago (there have been four books since), carved out a terrain less influenced by the world beyond. Having drilled a hole in his ceiling, Dunn hoped in vain for a signal from above. In *Local Time* he finds signals, or what he thinks are signals, in unlikely places—chasing with paper cups the cricket that's slipped through the screen "in a confusion of warmth," blind to conventional divisions between outside and inside. No longer content to wait for the world to drop in his lap, Dunn recalls leaving home with a bat in his hands; he vows to run the bases, to come back dirty if not wise.

"Round Trip," the long, circuitous poem that gives its title to the first of *Local Time*'s three sections, serves as a microcosm for the collection as a whole: a journey to "some not-home place / where I can pivot / at supper time, make my way back / as if I'd made a choice." It starts with the lure of infinity: "I watched the prairie repeat itself / until it got beautiful, the geometry / of farms, the flatness / that made interesting the slightest / undulation. Never had the sky / touched so far down." But when this flatness becomes fearful, suggesting the swift passage of time, Dunn's speaker turns back from the limitless frontier to reinvent his childhood. Later, he retraces these steps as he watches his ten-year-old daughter go off to school:

> How to leave and come back—the schoolbus
> instructs my daughter it's easy
> and that for now is good.
>
> She's off again into numbers, words,
> all the necessary confusions.
> History, she believes,
>
> is what happens to others. Biology is what
> she lives with, but hasn't had.
> I'm watching from the window,
>
> the father who knows education
> is all about departures, who knows
> when things are right
>
> nobody comes home the same. The
> schoolbus
> has left a hole in the landscape.
> Air fills it now, the low sky
>
> we don't call sky for some reason.

These lines themselves inch forward and crawl back, embodying in poetic form the twin impulses of their speaker.

Dunn's chronic ambivalence manifests itself in his juxtaposition not only of this world and a contracting horizon, but of self and other, male and female. "Round Trip" ends, after numerous intimations of personal loss, with the temporary establishment of autonomy: "I put on my running shoes, / ran the full circle / of the park, showered, turned on the / important game. The whole season / was on the line, the announcer said, and it was." Yet this closure is soon threatened (or graced) by "the noise of others— / a child's whine, my wife saying No—" And it is just this hesitant belief in the sometime benevolence of an "other" world that saves Dunn's poetry from self-dramatization.

From here, Dunn takes us through a series of poems that explore both the gulf between the sexes and its rare and miraculous bridging—the fine line between common ground and irreconcilable difference. The section ends with the demands of the ordinary, with the reality of a shared territory that is less than wholly satisfying:

> . . . it's that little invisible cloud
> in the livingroom,
> floating like boredom, it's the odor
>
> of disappointment mixing with
> kitchen smells,
> which ask of us all that we have.
>
> The man coming in now
> to the woman
> The woman going out to the man.

Local Time's middle section, "Stories," examines the myths we create to gloss over such a reality. It moves from the advent of television ("We knelt before it / like natives / in front of something sent by parachute") to the cultish solace of religion. In "At the Smithville Methodist Church," the poet takes his daughter to "Arts & Crafts" and she comes home having learned a song in which they "jump up and down / for Jesus." Unable to compete, Dunn laments the poetic deficiencies of hero-less evolution: "The story stinks / of extinction and nothing / exciting happens for centuries." Possessing nothing to put in the place of his daughter's newfound faith, Dunn "sings along" with her in silence.

In "The Obscene," a poem that teaches an alternative catechism, Dunn remembers a time when it was easier to believe: "In the spring, / on a day so warm that girls wore / nothing on their arms, I was confirmed." "Confirmed," here, is of course double-edged and ironic; Dunn continues his metaphysical waffling, confirmed only in a sort of vague agnosticism. But while such Prufrockian uncertainty might ordinarily provoke impatience, Dunn's candid vulnerability tests us. Vacillating between a "desire to float / between the egg and the grave, / unaccountable, neither lost nor found" and "wanting the comfortable / orthodoxies of home," he ends this section of the book with "The Return," by asking "How to say father and be small / and mean it again."

IN AN EFFORT to answer this question and come to terms with his own eventual death, Dunn opens the last section of *Local Time* with a series of poems that allude to the work of his poetic fathers. "Toward the Verrazano," which begins "Up from South Jersey" (echoing Whitman's "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"), travels through smokestacks and garbage dumps "past Arthur Kill Road" in order to "hook toward the Outerbridge" and achieve the transcendent: "In the distance there it is, the crown / of this back way in, immense, silvery, / and in no time we're suspended / out over the Narrows by a logic linked / to faith. . . ." Such faith is still tentative, however, and in his next poem we see the flip side of Dunn's Whitmanesque optimism: "a gray man / on a gray coast" who's more than a little reminiscent of Eliot's "Gerontion." With "Completion" Dunn again moves inside, further eroding the illusion of self-protection through his speaker's mixed feelings about finishing a room in his house:

> Outside, in the street and beyond,
> was the world made by others,
> fascinating, not to be trusted.
> Always it had called to him
> and always he came.
> His room seemed foolish, an umbrella
> in a typhoon. It was done.
> It certainly wouldn't do.

Come October, he resolves in "Living with Hornets," he'll "be brave enough" to study *another* species' nest, to "bring it inside, examine the emptiness / these papermakers called home." In the meantime he flees his own home and sits outside under the black oaks, listening to the acorns fall like hailstones—"a natural jazz." He imagines his sleeping chil-

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dren frozen cocoonlike in time: "safe in the half dark dawn, / the fog protective, the short morning / of childhood prolonged."

But with "Aerial in the Pines," having run "the full circle" prefigured in "Round Trip," Dunn surrenders once again to the simulated clarity of television: "To cut off the top branches / of the majestic pine / (once unthinkable for us) / was a bit of nature traded / for clear reception, / for what was fundamental now." In the end as in the beginning, he watches sports—and the "whole season" is "on the line":

> the human spirit rising
> and falling
> against excellence, against time—
>
> one good clear transcendence
> worth one desecration
> of a pine—though some nights
>
> we needed what was mindless, too,
> those final chases
> ten minutes before the hour
>
> along winding ocean roads, what we
> expected
> when we expected it
> (as if in a dream) coming true.

The living of our lives, Dunn reminds us, is a constant relinquishing of such dreams, a perpetual accommodation to "local time." His speaker has been to the "not-home place" he envisioned earlier and now must "pivot," for Dunn's title poem, the last in this elegantly symmetrical collection, begins at "supper time":

> It was odd how dinner hour
> was always approaching,
>
> odd how we counted,
> what we counted on.
>
> You folded the napkins
> in triangles, set the prehistoric
>
> knives and forks. . . .

The poet's "house," with its colon for a lock, is both foreign and all too familiar. Turning to his garden "as once I turned to foreign films / for the real," Dunn now finds pleasure only in the moon flower: "lily-like, / opening in the dark." Having long since bought "the house in the cyclic fog / that looked so new," he ends *Local Time* between thunderstorms:

> Though the sky turned perfect
> our dog trembled, hid.
>
> Something was out there,
> he was sure. The sparrows,
>
> no less foolish or wise,
> returned to the yard and sang.

JENNIFER KRAUSS

TRB, *from page 4*

"Methodists Oppose Use of Nuclear Arms" (*Times*, April 30). And maybe an honorable mention in this category should go to "Sorry, the Deficit Is a Big Problem" (over a recent column by—whoops—me).

April and May brought a magnificent spring flowering of hardy perennials. These are headlines that reappear regularly. Generally it is the news itself, rather than the headliner's art, that deserves the credit here. The events these headlines chronicle can be subdivided wearily into things that always happen ("B-1B Bomber Cost Expected to Rise," *Times*, May 4) and things that never happen ("Newark Hopes for Rebound," *Times* [front page!], May 5). Other recent hardy-perennial blossoms: "Teamster Chief May Face Renewed Federal Charges" (*Post*, April 24); "Bush Seeks New Hampshire Support" (*Times*, April 18); and "E. Germans Open Party Congress" (*Post*, April 18). The Democratic Party is a fertile source of hardy perennials. I liked "Democrats Plot Course/Party Told to End Its 'Vietnam Syndrome'" (*Post*, May 4), though a friend was generous enough to share with me a vintage example from his personal cellar: "Democrats Propose Shift in Rules for Presidential Nomination" (*Times*, October 19, 1985; see also 1981, 1977, 1973, 1969 . . .).

A reader in Milwaukee rather viciously sent in "Economist Dies," from the *Wisconsin State Journal*, April 20. Every day, it seems, the economics profession develops new evidence to support Lord Keynes's famous proposition that "in the long run, we are all dead."

For its brilliant counterpoint of overexcited adjective with mundane and obscure subject matter, I was tempted to award first prize in this competition (one copy of *A Time to Heal* by Gerald Ford) to the lead headline on the "Washington Talk" page of the *Times*, May 13: "Turbulent Days for Donald D. Engen." That middle initial is an especially bravura touch, I think. It fills the reader with an urgent desire not to know who Donald Engen is and with disbelief that his days could be all that turbulent. But in the end, the judges chose a months-old subhead from the *Times* science section: "Debate Goes on Over the Nature of Reality." Further examples are welcome, but somehow, I don't think that one will ever be topped.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

that of the U.S. All the huffing and puffing by Americans and Europeans over international trade is usually leveled at Japan. Hasn't anyone at TNR been reading the news stories on the stronger yen and its global significance? Japan is obviously the United States's most important ally in Asia (maybe the most important ally, period). And President Reagan has met more often with Prime Minister Nakasone than with any other head of state. They don't discuss the latest in kimono fashions: they discuss global affairs.

JOHN E. VAN SANT
Ikeda City, Osaka, Japan

ROBERTS REPLIES

To the editors:
In "Jim Baker Remakes the World" (April 21), Robert Kuttner calls me an "ultra-conservative eccentric." Such name-calling is a perfect example of hubris that refuses to acknowledge a person's accomplishments.

Mr. Kuttner and I have never conversed on any subject, and since he is unlikely to be well versed in my scholarly work, the basis for his name-calling is not readily apparent. If Mr. Kuttner has ever contributed a factual element to any discussion, no one knows what it is. In contrast, I have published three university press books, each of which is recognized for its contribution to knowledge, and a large number of scholarly articles in journals ranging from *Slavic Review* to *Classica et Mediaevalia* to *Ethics* to the *Journal of Political Economy*. Some of these articles are required reading in university courses. Major financial institutions and government officials from many countries ask for my advice. I have held a presidential appointment and was confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Even in my part-time occupation as a journalist, I have held more distinguished positions than Kuttner, for whom the occupation is a full-time career. Indeed, he even owes his *Business Week* forum to the fact that I made a new feature so successful that the editors decided to expand it and include others. I thought at the time that Kuttner was a bad choice, since he is not professionally qualified as an economist. His recent outburst of childish polemics reinforces my opinion.

PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS
Washington, D.C.

Robert Kuttner replies:
I rest my case.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Suspicions

IN VIEW OF THE U.S. air strikes against Libya, I've become uneasy about security measures in the city where I'll be spending the summer. Rome? Athens? No, Washington, D.C., where public discomfort these days stems more from stringency than from laxity. The problem is that in Washington there's a potential symbol of Yankee imperialism on every block. Any structure prefixed with the word "national" will do. I've even had my belongings searched at the National Museum of American History. What was I going to do, blow up their plastic replicas of the first ladies? One lesson I've learned is that whereas the idea when traveling abroad is to avoid looking American, the idea here—if you want to be spared a frisking—is to avoid looking Libyan. If you're tan, now is a good time to peel.

MEANWHILE, I'VE BEEN looking for a new place to live. Getting into a Washington group house or sublet, it seems, is an even bigger political challenge than getting into the National Museum of American History. In the course of my recent search, I was closely questioned on three occasions by potential roommates or landlords concerned about potentially disruptive right-wing political views. Anxious to avoid coming across as a young conservative convert, I found myself reciting halfhearted left-leaning reservations about some recent TNR editorials. This, of course, is the reverse of the classic 1980s technique in which the young progressive adapts his worldview to suit the conservatism of his new Wall Street bosses. I console myself with the rationalization that unlike those contemptible opportunists, I am not gaining vast wealth and power in exchange for my values. Selling out is a much graver sin if you get a good price for it. All I want is a place to sleep.

THE PAPERS REPORTED last month that 96.7 percent of Texas public school teachers passed a statewide competence test. Now, I grew up in Texas, and I can assure you there's no way 96.7 percent of that state's teachers deserve to pass such a test. I look upon this remarkable performance with the same level of credulity I mustered for the Communist Party's stunning triumph in last year's elections to the Supreme Soviet. The principle to observe (see "The Tirana Index," TNR, December 13, 1982) is the same in both cases: the fraudulence of the exercise is proportional to the margin of victory. Look at the results of teacher testing in other states: in Arkansas, for example, 90 percent passed; in Virginia only 55 percent of prospective teachers passed an on-the-job evaluation. Virginians may have worried about the quality of their children's instruction, but at least they knew the truth. Texas governor Mark White, with stereotypical provincial arrogance, called the results in Texas "an A in anyone's book." No—just in *his* book. The only thing this little episode demonstrates is that Texas school administrators, like Texas teachers, are easy graders.

THE NATIONAL RIFLE Association, having blown away police lobbyists and gun-control advocates in a congressional battle during the past month, suddenly fired its public relations staff last week. An NRA representative told the *Washington Post* (which had roundly condemned the NRA's position throughout the contest) that his organization "wanted a more widespread impact, particularly with news organizations such as yours." This kind of thinking is symptomatic of the prevalent Washington assumption that any cause can be sold, given the right pitch. Unfortunately, brute threats such as the NRA's war chest of PAC money do have a depressing record of success in Congress. The press, however, has the luxury of weighing the arguments without worrying too much about its livelihood. So persuasion is the only weapon available, which is unfortunate for the NRA, since its case is so utterly unpersuasive. The fact is that not even Mike Deaver could sell a bill of goods as poor as the NRA's. If the NRA wants to bring the *Post* around to its way of seeing things, it would do better to stop wasting its breath and start treating the *Post* the way it treats hostile incumbents: namely, by turning its PAC money over to the local challenger, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon and his right-wing soapbox, the *Washington Times*.

EXTOLLING THE VIRTUES of accessible handguns sounds like a job for Lee Iacocca, the man who has so successfully marketed public hazards such as the Ford Pinto and himself. Now Iacocca has undertaken an even more daring venture. His estate in Italy is producing a red wine whose label will bear the Iacocca signature. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, experts judged the wine "unpretentious." Presumably this was a blind tasting. As if this delicately couched verdict weren't enough to dissuade potential purchasers, Iacocca's Detroit importer called the product "an outstanding wine in its class," the sort of guarded compliment one could just as easily pay to, say, Billy Beer. Is it mere coincidence that Iacocca's vineyards started up just as methanol contamination was discovered in cheap Italian wines? Perhaps the Chrysler CEO and demigod is looking for another Herculean marketing project. I plan to buy a bottle of Lee's finest and stow it away in my glove compartment. I may not be able to drink it, but perhaps someday, when my K-Car runs out of gas on a remote highway, it'll get me to the next filling station.

IT WILL BE WITH great sadness that I leave TNR to return to college this fall. Part of my sadness is that, thanks to an 11 percent hike in tuition and fees, I'll be shelling out $15,650 next year. I have lodged a formal protest against this outrage, pointing to the tragedy at Brown University, in which several students attending the $15,000-a-year school turned to prostitution. Since the Public Health Service lists prostitutes as a high-risk group for AIDS, I contend that the fee increase will bring a lethal epidemic to campus through multiple-partner sexual contact. So far my protest has not elicited a reply. If I don't see some action soon, I'm going to run for student council president on a LaRouche ticket. That'll teach 'em.

W. S.

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Medical Research–building a healthier future

If you've ever been treated for high blood pressure... heart disease...diabetes...or almost any health problem, medical progress based on research has already touched your life.

Because of medical research, polio no longer strikes in epidemic proportions every summer. Today about three-quarters of patients diagnosed as having Hodgkin's disease will survive five years or longer—as opposed to less than half twenty years ago. Current treatment options for people with heart disease and high blood pressure include medication that helps the body's natural regulators to control blood pressure and volume, enabling the heart to function with less strain.

Scientists are now working on new ways of treating such devastating afflictions as heart disease, cancer and Alzheimer's disease. They are testing new enzyme inhibitors that may control or reverse the late complications of diabetes. Forthcoming breakthroughs in understanding biological processes and treating disease may change the quality and perhaps the length of your life.

Medical research leading to such results takes years of patient, often frustrating experimentation by many different teams throughout the public and private sectors of our scientific community. The tasks involved are not simple.

Advances in research stem from a partnership that includes federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA), universities and teaching hospitals across America, and private industry laboratories. Each partner often works independently to acquire knowledge and test new concepts. They must build on the knowledge developed in all laboratories, and they often coordinate efforts in their search for answers.

Whether an idea originates in a university laboratory or starts with basic product research carried on in the private sector, important findings percolate through the entire scientific community, where each new finding serves as a building block to establish a deeper understanding of what we are and how we function.

Medical research is an expensive process. It needs steady funding for equipment and personnel—even when progress is slow. Government and industry often work with university-based scientists and the medical profession not only in the acquisition of new knowledge and the development of new treatments, but also in funding these advances.

Now more than ever, we all must do our part to help keep the flow of discoveries active and ongoing. If funding for medical research is reduced, major advances in knowledge about some of the most dreaded diseases facing us today could be delayed for years to come.

What can you do?

- *Speak up*. Let your legislators know that you want funding of biomedical research by NIH and other government agencies to be kept at the highest possible levels.
- *Contribute* to voluntary health organizations supporting disease research.

Research-based pharmaceutical companies such as Pfizer are also increasing their financial investment in research. For instance, in 1984 alone, pharmaceutical companies in the United States spent over 4 *billion* dollars on research and product development.

At the same time, we at Pfizer realize the importance of committing more than money to research. As a partner in healthcare, we are continually working to discover new ideas, test new concepts, and turn new understanding to practical and beneficial uses. Now we are working harder than ever to make sure that this nation's medical research effort receives the attention—and funding—it deserves.

For more information on the future of medical research in America, write to Health Research U.S.A., P.O. Box 3852 FR, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

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Kings: 8 mg "tar," 0.5 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Feb.'85

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